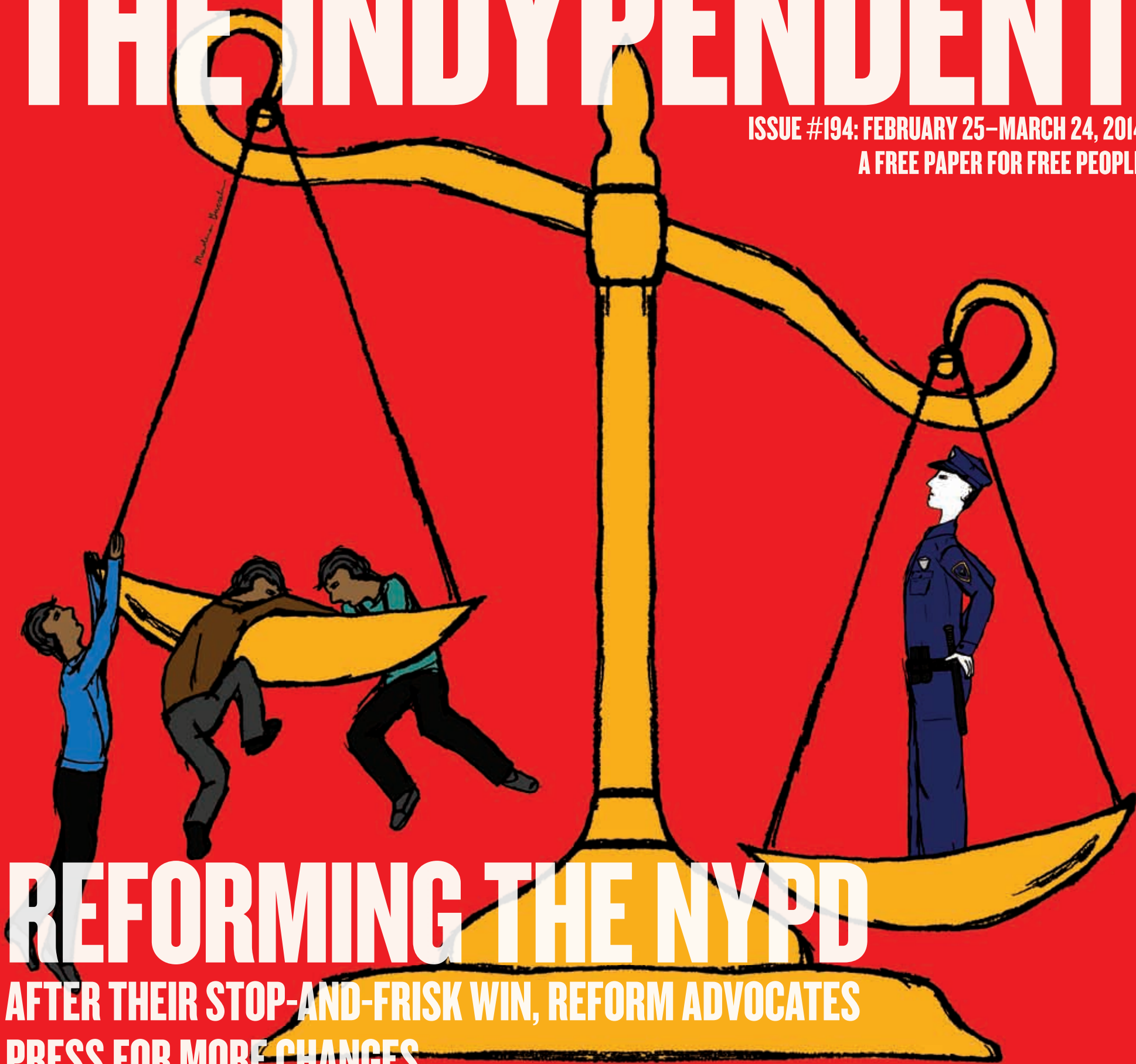


THE INDYPENDENT

ISSUE #194: FEBRUARY 25–MARCH 24, 2014
A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE



REFORMING THE NYPD

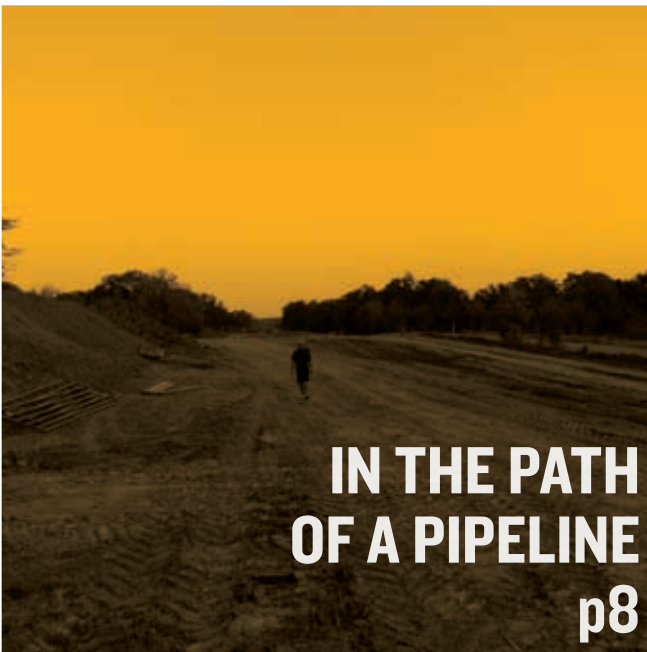
AFTER THEIR STOP-AND-FRISK WIN, REFORM ADVOCATES
PRESS FOR MORE CHANGES.

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MARLENA BUCZEK SMITH



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the reader's voice



JANUARY 2014 INDYPENDENT

NEWS YOU CAN BELIEVE

After hearing on NPR (Fox-lite) today that studies show gentrification is a “good thing,” I have to send you my support. I don’t have lots of money, but things are getting better and it sure isn’t due to gentrification of my neighborhood!

All the best,
HANK DOMBROWSKI
MANHATTAN

Responses to “Carmen Fariña in Charge: What Stance Should Educators and Activists Take Toward the New Chancellor?” in the January Indypendent.

Educators must have much more realistic input on how to proceed with the new Common Core Curriculum. Some of CCC is of value, but many parts are redundant and too time-consuming. In my view, there is a lot of overkill in the CCC. This doesn’t allow educators the necessary time to focus on the

needs of individual students. This overvaluation of testing does not enhance children’s cognitive development. Further, it promotes low self-esteem among struggling learners.

— SYLVIA TYLER

Yesterday a phone survey was conducted, calling teachers to ask about Fariña, de Blasio, the United Federation of Teachers, seniority, retroactive pay, testing, evals and more. Not sure who commissioned it but it’s nice to know someone is asking teachers to weigh in. They were also curious to know how teachers get their news, whether they go to UFT website, get the UFT newsletter or use Twitter or Facebook.

I’d say teachers, parents and taxpayers should get on social media and make it really clear as to how you feel about testing and evals. If the public knew that most teachers in NYC now have their evaluations tied to test scores in subjects they don’t even teach, they’d be outraged. And some teachers are actually graded on test scores of kids they have never even met, so the system cannot possibly be accurate.

— NYC TEACHER

FULL UNDERSTANDING

Let us face it. The only way to fully understand is to hear and understand the alternate views (“Still Dreaming: Frances Goldin and the Book She Had to Have,” January *Indypendent*).

— GEORGE-LOUIS FERDINAND

Responses to “Food Stamp Cuts: Who Can Eat on \$136 per Month?” in the January Indypendent.

Great article. I worked for Food Force, a food stamp advocacy program intended to increase participation in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The only thing I would make a friendly aside about is that Bloomberg can’t take credit for on-line applications or extended hours at food stamp centers; those things were in development long before he ever came along and are still not widely available. Although he was quick to see the potential for taking credit for himself, I saw right away that he would use access to food stamps and EITC as a justification for opposing movements for a guaranteed living wage.

— MARIA MIENTES

USA should be cutting aid to foreign countries instead of aid to their citizens. Politicians should be made to experience living on food stamps and not being able to use their own money for a few months, and then maybe they would understand what they are doing to American people.

— CAROL JOYCE

Why have food aid at all? How about getting a job!

— BB

CONSCIOUSNESS RAISED

Thank you Nicholas Powers for this very exceptional piece of writing (“Black Consciousness in a Post-Heroic Age,” January *Indypendent*). Your breadth and

scope give voice to the freedom of thought and the universality of compassion, and with utmost respect, your piece is an impressively well-balanced autobiographical narrative. Please always share your incredible talent to express the deeper resounding of the human heart through all life in its many infinite varieties, in its grounding unity. In solidarity.

— MATT HANSON

COMMENT ON THE NEWS AT INDYPENDENT.ORG, FACEBOOK.COM/THEINDYPENDENT OR SEND A LETTER TO THE INDYPENDENT, 388 ATLANTIC AVE., 2ND FL, BROOKLYN, NY, 11217. WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO EDIT FOR LENGTH AND CLARITY.

CORRECTION: The January issue of The Indypendent included a music review of the band Little Waist, the original headline of which appeared as “Gender Benders Rock Their Fenders.” It was later changed online to “Pop, Punk, Protest and Pastiche: Little Waist at the Rock Shop.” The choice of the term “gender benders” was the decision of the editorial team and we apologize to the members of Little Waist for its inappropriate use.



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VÉRONIQUE KOLBER

WOMEN'S MONTH: Maysles Cinema will screen a documentary on the life of Grace Lee Boggs (left), on March 6. A screening of a movie (above) on the life of Hannah Arendt will be held March 14 at the PSC/CUNY Union Hall.

THROUGH APRIL 12

Various • Free
PROGRAM: FREE TAX PREPARATION SERVICE. AARP will provide free tax preparation on Wednesdays 11am–3pm and on Saturdays 10:30am–2:30pm. Come get your taxes done! First come first serve.
58th Street Library
127 E 58th St
212-759-7358 • nypl.org

SAT MAR 1 & SUN MAR 2

12–6pm • Free
TRAINING: DARING TO BE POWERFUL IN BROOKLYN. Join the Audre Lourde project for two days of skills building and analysis of oppression with opportunities for strategizing and organizing. This training is specifically intended for LGBTSTGNC people of color. Registration deadline Feb 26.
Brooklyn Community Pride Center
4 Metrotech Center, Ground Floor, Bklyn
718-596-0342 • alp.org

THU MAR 6 – TUE MAR 11

Various • Free • \$18
SCREENINGS: NY DISABILITIES FILM FESTIVAL. The NY Disabilities Film Festival is the largest festival in the U.S. promoting awareness and appreciation of the lives of those with disabilities. Post-screening

discussions and other engaging programs will accompany the screenings.
NY Disabilities Film Festival
334 Amsterdam Ave
646-505-5738 • newyork.reelabilities.org

THU MAR 6

7pm • \$11
SCREENING: *AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY: GRACE LEE BOGGS*. This documentary explores the life of Grace Lee Boggs — the legendary 98-year-old writer, activist and philosopher from Detroit — and her evolving vision of revolution, which will surprise you.
Maysles Documentary Center
343 Lennox Ave/Malcolm X Blvd
212-537-6843 • maysles.org

SAT MAR 8

8pm • \$18
MUSIC: ALIX DOBKIN AND WOOL&GRANT. Come celebrate International Women's Day with Alix Dobkin, a folk singer with songs focusing on women in general and lesbians in particular. She'll be joined by May Wool and Bev Grant, a singer-songwriter duo of wild women.
Peoples' Voice Café
40 E 35th St
212-787-3903 • peoplesvoicecafe.org

MON MAR 10

5:30–6:30pm • Free
GROUP: EXCESS ANONYMOUS. Why do human beings continue to destroy the environment when they know it's destroying their quality of life? Meeting every Monday and incorporating the 12–step program, this group will try to address living with ecological accountability in today's world.
Judson Memorial Church
The Garden Room
239 Thompson St
212-477-0351 • judson.org

TUE MAR 11

8pm • Free • Donations accepted
PERFORMANCE: A BLACK HISTORY/WOMEN'S HISTORY CELEBRATION. A performance by Liberata Dance Theatre featuring live music and Afro Caribbean Dance.
Goddard Riverside Community Center
647 Columbus Ave at 91st St
917-324-9369 • liberatadt.blogspot.com

FRI MAR 14

6:30pm • Free
SCREENING: *HANNAH ARENDT*. A historical fiction narrative about the German-Jewish philosopher's witnessing and writing about the 1961 trial of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann. It resulted in the seminal work,

Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil.
PSC/CUNY Union Hall
61 Broadway, 16 Fl
212-354-1252 • psc-cuny.org

TUE MAR 18

6:30pm • Free
EVENT: BORN THIS WAY? THE RADICAL LEGACY OF MAGNUS HIRSCHFIELD AND THE FIGHT FOR LGBT EQUALITY. An LGBT rights pioneer who was exiled by the Nazis, Hirschfield's work is being reexamined as LGBT struggles become increasingly prominent.
Rosa Luxemburg Foundation
275 Madison Ave, Suite 2114
917-409-1043 • rosalex-nyc.org

SAT MAR 22

12pm • \$5
WORKSHOP: SPRINGTIME COMPOSTING. In this hands-on workshop you'll learn the basics of outdoor composting, including converting yard waste and kitchen scraps into fertilizer. Time for flowers!
La Plaza Cultural Garden
Avenue C & E 9th St
212-477-4022 • lesecologycenter.org

MON MAR 24

6pm • Free
BOOGIE TIME: COMMUNITY DANCE CLASS. Want to dance? Come to a community class blending traditional African dance with contemporary. Led by Ronald K. Brown and his dance company, Evidence. All ages and skill levels welcome.
Ingersoll Community Center
177 Myrtle Ave, Bklyn
718-855-2923 • bricartsmedia.org

THU MAR 27 – SUN MAR 30

Various, ranging 9am–8pm • Various options \$10–\$80
CONFERENCE: 12TH NATIONAL BLACK WRITERS CONFERENCE: RECONSTRUCTING THE MASTER NARRATIVE. Join the Center for Black Literature for a four-day conference full of conversation, poetry readings, film screenings, workshops, panels and literary analysis.
Medgar Evers College, CUNY
1650 Bedford Ave, Bklyn
718-804-8883 • centerforblackliterature.org

THU MAR 27

6:30pm • Free
DISCUSSION: TORTURE, INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM. Conversation with Juan E. Mendez, visiting law professor at American University, and Amrit Singh of the Open Society Justice Initiative. An installment of the ongoing series at CCNY, "Human Rights: A Yearlong Forum at the City College."
The City College of New York
Shepard Hall, Room 558
138th St at Convent Ave
212-650-7396 • humanrightsscny.org

SAT MAR 29

12–6pm • \$3 Suggested donation
BOOKS: 6TH ANNUAL NEW YORK RAINBOW BOOK FAIR. The largest LGBT book event in the U.S.!
Holiday Inn Midtown
440 W 57th St
rainbowbookfair.org

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HAVE YOU WANTED TO TRY YOUR HAND AT JOURNALISM BUT YOU'RE NOT SURE WHERE TO START?

THE INDYPENDENT WILL BE HOSTING A COMMUNITY REPORTING WORKSHOP SATURDAY, MARCH 15 FROM 1–5 PM. WE WILL COVER THE BASICS OF JOURNALISM INCLUDING LEDE WRITING, INTERVIEWING, RESEARCH AND STORY DEVELOPMENT. LIMITED SPACES ARE AVAILABLE. TO RECEIVE AN APPLICATION, PLEASE EMAIL THE EDITORS AT CONTACT@INDYPENDENT.ORG. SLIDING SCALE \$10–\$30.

Police Reform's Next Step

BY ALEX S. VITALE

The appointment of William Bratton to be the once and future NYPD police commissioner brought groans from many police reform advocates. Bratton's previous tenure under Mayor Rudolph Giuliani brought with it numerous complaints of heavyhanded policing toward homeless people, political demonstrators, sex workers and anyone deemed "disorderly" by the NYPD or Giuliani.

The political context for policing in New York, however, has changed significantly since then, even if Bratton's underlying philosophy of policing hasn't. The early 1990s were a time of very high crime rates in New York City, especially in communities of color, where shootings were sometimes nightly occurrences, open air drug markets thrived and many public spaces were largely unusable. At that time it was communities of color as much as anyone else who demanded more aggressive policing.

SHIFTING POLITICAL WINDS

The political winds in New York have shifted since then. On January 30, the city's political and civil liberties leaders joined together to announce a settlement in the *Floyd v. City of New York* stop-and-frisk litigation. After several years of legal and political organizing, the NYPD has agreed to stop engaging in widespread unlawful street stops and establish an independent monitor, with a mandate to reach out to affected communities to ensure the city is complying.

While on its face a legal victory, in actuality it took the election of a new mayor to end what would have likely been many years of appeals by the city. Several years of grassroots organizing and coalition building were necessary to create the political space that allowed de Blasio to rise to the top of the mayoral pack on a pro-reform agenda. It was these efforts that dramatically shifted public opinion concerning stop-and-frisk and the perceptions of racial injustice in NYPD practices.

With crime down substantially (concerns about police data manipulation notwithstanding), the accumulation of over a decade of bad blood between the NYPD and those on the receiving end of their aggressive and invasive policing practices, and potential pressure from a federal monitor and the new inspector general, some reforms are afoot. Even before Bratton took over the

number of reported stop-and-frisks fell dramatically, as have low level marijuana arrests.

Through his tenures in Boston, New York and Los Angeles, Bratton has shown himself to be an adaptable political animal and a smart and innovative manager. He is fully aware of this change in political context and has made a proactive effort to speak with critics of the department in a way that was unheard of during either the Giuliani or Bloomberg administrations. Despite accusations of heavy-handed policing in Los Angeles, Bratton managed to retain the support of minority community leaders and a strong majority of the general public across race lines.

MAINTAIN THE PRESSURE

Does this mean, however, that police reform advocates should pat themselves on the back and leave the details to Bratton and the city lawyers? Hardly. Since the reforms that have been achieved so far have been the result of political mobilization, it is only the continuation of these mobilizations that will keep

liberal political establishment will deflect and demobilize grassroots reform initiatives, but that doesn't seem likely in the short run.

Communities United for Police Reform (CPR), the coalition behind the Community Safety Act, which included the creation of an inspector general for the NYPD as well as the legal and political force behind the Floyd case, is continuing to raise awareness about a broad range of police accountability issues. Their main post-Bloomberg focus seems to be on insuring that there is not a return to wide-spread

stop- and-frisk practices and calling for a strong inspector general with a broad mandate for change. They will also undoubtedly be involved in the community engagement aspects of the federal monitoring created by the Floyd settlement agreement.

The Police Reform Organizing Project (PROP) at the Urban Justice Center is showing no signs of slowing down either. This group has always had a broad analysis of police wrongdoing that included the harassment and criminalization of sex workers, LGBT communities, street vendors, political activists and communities of color.

While less enthusiastic about the inspector general, they share CPR's ongoing concerns about monitoring the level of stop-and-frisk and other forms of aggres-



MARLENA BUCZEK SMITH

BOTH DE BLASIO AND BRATTON HAVE SIGNALLED A CONTINUED ALLEGIANCE TO THE "BROKEN WINDOWS" THEORY, AN APPROACH TO PUBLIC SAFETY IN WHICH THE POLICE ARE USED TO CREATE A RENEWED MORAL ORDER OF PUBLIC CIVILITY THROUGH EVER MORE INVASIVE AND PERVERSIVE INTERVENTIONS INTO OUR PERSONAL AFFAIRS.

the pressure on to insure that existing victories remain in place and to push for a slew of additional much-needed changes. There is always a risk that a new more

AFTER STOP-AND-FRISK, 8 MORE WAYS TO REFORM THE NYPD

- Back away from quotas for police officers, a hallmark of the Ray Kelly era.
- Stop the harassment of sex workers and street vendors.
- End the surveillance of Muslims and political activists in cases where there is no evidence of criminal intent.
- Legalize marijuana. Young people of color make up the vast majority of arrestees for pot possession.
- Utilize community-based anti-violence initiatives that involve peer-to-peer counseling of youth.
- Create safe spaces for kids to get off the street such as after-school programs and midnight basketball during the summer.
- Change the way police handle people with mental illness.

Pair police with mental health professionals who are prepared to deal with people experiencing a mental health crisis using therapeutic rather than control-oriented methods.

- Give the newly formed inspector general position more power. The IG is appointed by another mayoral appointee and can probe police abuses, but the inspector's recommendations are not binding.

sive and invasive policing. Since the appointment of Bratton, the group has continued its street outreach, in the form of tabling and petition drives and the holding of public events that bring together diverse constituencies concerned about police misconduct. On March 20 they will be holding a panel at the Ethical Culture Society in Manhattan and releasing a new report produced by Fordham Law School that lays out a range of short- and long-term reforms needed in the NYPD, including backing away from quotas, ending the surveillance of Muslims and political activists, stopping the harassment of sex workers and street vendors and the legalization of marijuana.

REDUCING THE POLICE'S ROLE

Some of the most important reforms in policing may actually be about taking steps to reduce the role of police in producing public safety. This past fall State Senator Liz Kruger introduced a bill to fully legalize marijuana for personal use in New York. The Drug Policy Alliance and other groups are supporting this bill in part as a way of reducing the power of the police to criminalize young people of color, who made up the vast majority of the 50,000 people a year arrested for marijuana under former Police Commissioner Ray Kelly.

City Councilman Jumaane Williams, from Flatbush, Brooklyn, has long championed support for community-based anti-violence initiatives that involve peer-to-peer counseling of youth, street mediation initiatives and the creation of safe places for young people to get off the streets. Along with the new chair of the City Council's Public Safety Committee, Vanessa Gibson, of the Bronx, there is a possibility for the first time in many years of meaningful legislative oversight of the NYPD as long as community pressure remains in place.

Muslim and South Asian community organizations also remain highly mobilized to bring about fundamental changes to the way terrorism policing is conducted in New York. Matt Appazo and Adam Goldman's investigative book *Enemies Within* showed clearly the extent of unwarranted surveillance of Muslims and its total ineffectiveness. The NYCLU and others filed the lawsuit *Raza v. City of New York* last year in an effort to end a variety of what they believe are illegal surveillance practices. Neither de Blasio nor Bratton have indicated they will make any meaningful changes to this kind of policing and no settlement in that case seems forthcoming.

WHEN ACTIVISTS ARE TARGETED

Appazo and Goldman's work also showed that political activists are being subjected to unwarranted surveillance in the post 9-11 environment. Previously such groups had been protected from unreasonable spying by the Handschu consent decree, which required real evidence of criminal wrong doing to initiate surveillance and infiltration of political groups. The outgoing NYPD counterterrorism chief,

David Cohen, succeeded in having these controls watered down by equating contentious political activism with terrorism. Over the last several months a number of the groups named in leaked NYPD documents, such as Times Up! and Friends of Brad Will, along with others, have been developing plans to demand that political spying be once again restricted given the NYPD's proclivity to widespread political information-gathering, infiltration and even undercover disruption of nonviolent political groups.

There is also widespread support among reform advocates for changing the way police handle people with mental illness. Despite decades of litigation and community protest, the NYPD continues to adhere to a variety of counter-productive procedures, which frequently end in violence and criminalization for the mentally ill. Advocates such as Communities for Crisis Intervention Teams in NYC (CCIT-NYC) are calling for the creation of different kinds of responses that pair police with mental health professionals who are prepared to deal with people experiencing a mental health crisis using therapeutic rather than control-oriented methods.

NO ILLUSIONS

Reformers should not have any illusions about the extent to which radical reforms will be forthcoming. Both de Blasio and Bratton have signaled a continued allegiance to the "broken windows" theory, which is at heart a deeply neoconservative approach to public safety in which the police are used to create a renewed moral order of public civility through ever more invasive and pervasive interventions into our personal affairs.

While the NYPD may reduce its reliance on "stop, question, and frisk" as such, it is likely to be replaced by more targeted forms of order-maintenance tactics, possibly with greater buy-in from the communities being policed. So-called targeted or focused deterrence initiatives, for example, have become popular in many cities such as Boston, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Los Angeles and Chicago.

During his time in Los Angeles, Bratton was a strong supporter of stop-and-frisk-style tactics as well as crackdowns on the homeless on Skid Row and other areas ripe for gentrification. The road to more fundamental reforms will remain a long one, but the level of ongoing political activity pressuring the police, from grassroots "copwatch" programs in the Bronx, Manhattan and Brooklyn to major civil rights litigation in federal court holds out hope for change.

Alex Vitale is a professor of sociology at Brooklyn College and author of City of Disorder: How the Quality of Life Campaign Transformed New York Politics (NYU Press, 2009). You can follow him on Twitter at @avitale.



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Homeless Folks Have Real Solutions to the Housing Crisis

BY ARVERNETTA HENRY, SCOTT HUTCHINS, LYNN LEWIS, FELIPE MARTINEZ, SAM J. MILLER, MARCUS MOORE AND STANLEY STEVENSON

Editor's note: "Homeless people know what's not working, and they know what needs to change," say members and staff at Picture the Homeless. PTH was founded during the Giuliani era, when the homeless were regularly demonized. Led by its members, the group has consistently advocated homeless rights and for creative policy solutions that would make truly affordable housing available to everyone. With a new mayor who campaigned on a platform of a "tale of two cities," The Independent invited PTH members and staff to share their thoughts on how to solve a crisis they know more intimately than anyone in this city.

When Bill de Blasio took office on January 1, he inherited a broken, bloated and expensive homeless shelter system that cost almost \$1 billion to operate in 2013. He also inherited neighborhoods dotted with vacant buildings and lots that represent both potential housing and jobs. For New York's homeless, there is a Kafkaesque paradigm where so-called affordable housing is in fact unaffordable due to the federal government's Area Median Income guidelines.

Those who can't afford housing are the same unemployed, or low-wage workers, seniors, disabled and just poor New Yorkers in the shelter system. On bitterly cold nights this winter, the shelter-industrial complex housed more than 50,000 adults and children — enough to fill Yankee Stadium. That didn't include those using the domestic violence shelter system and the untold numbers of homeless folks sleeping in churches, mosques and synagogues. Nor does it include the thousands sleeping in trains, public transit facilities or parks. It doesn't include the hundreds of thousands doubled or tripled up with friends and family hoping for a break so that they don't have to go into the shelter system.

REAL ROOTS OF THE PROBLEM

Homelessness has been framed as the result of individual dysfunction and pathology. "Oh, they're mentally ill, or they need to get a job," — this mantra has been repeated by politicians and media for two decades. Picture the Homeless encourages the de Blasio administration to look at the big picture, to take into account rising rents and stagnant incomes at the bottom of the wage scale. Forces like gentrification, property warehousing and disinvestment in effective housing programs such as Section 8 have led us to where we are today.

The bottom-line cause of homelessness is the high cost of housing. Real estate development here has been geared to business interests, hotels and high rises, offices and office towers. When there is new housing construction, it's for the super rich. Banks and landlords keep buildings empty while they wait for neighborhoods to gentrify, and to get rid of protections on rent-stabilized apartments.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg took away the homeless priority for permanent housing solutions like Section 8 and public housing, replacing them with time-limited rental subsidy programs (first Housing Stability Plus and then the Advantage programs) that were doomed from the start.

Past administrations have cried poverty when asked why they don't prioritize housing for homeless people, but that's a lie. The money's there, it's just being wasted on a politically connected shelter-industrial complex. A billion dollars a year could house a lot of people. Most shelters get two to three times as much money per month for each homeless household as it would cost to pay their rent.

In 2011, we partnered with the Hunter College Center for Community Planning and Development to devise and execute a replicable methodology for how the city could conduct a vacant property census. We found enough empty buildings and lots to house up to 200,000 people, and that was just in one-third of the city. But the city doesn't keep track of vacant property and the little bit of

money that is out there is being used to house people in shelters.

Every homeless person is different, and it's true that mental illness and substance abuse play a role in some people losing their housing, but plenty of very wealthy people have issues of substance abuse or mental illness. The root issue is poverty. Public policy needs to address the systemic causes of homelessness. No mayor or president can implement a policy to stop people from having mental illness or losing their jobs, but they can make it so that everyone can afford housing.

There are numerous factors that contribute to record levels of homelessness, like how people coming home from jail with a record are excluded from housing, so there's nowhere for them to go. Banks are still redlining in certain communities. Institutional racism is also a huge problem — over 90 percent of homeless families in shelters are African-American and/or Latino. Predatory lending has been targeting people of color. Ninety-nine percent of the people who go into housing court get no legal representation, so many of them end up losing their homes.

There's no cohesive overall plan between government agencies that serve low-income people, and that adds up to a lot of resources being wasted. There's no unity or collaboration between housing courts and the welfare and shelter systems. HRA, DHS, NYPD — it's a whole lot of alphabet soup that doesn't add up to anything.

People say homeless people should go get jobs — but people have jobs! The pay just doesn't match the rental market. Very low wages, including social security and other income forms for folks who aren't working, plus inadequate income supports, plus high rents, equal homelessness. It's simple math.

MAKING DEMANDS

At Picture the Homeless, we don't just complain about problems. Homeless people know what's not working, and they know what needs to change. That's why our organizing campaigns have concrete policy demands of the new administration.

For starters, it's unacceptable that the city has no idea how much property is currently vacant. We have to have conduct an annual citywide count of vacant buildings and lots, so we know what kind of resources are out there to develop new housing — and who's keeping housing off the market. Legislation that would empower the city to do such a count was stalled for three years in the City



ROUGH WINTER: A homeless man tries to get some rest on a park bench.

Council under Christine Quinn. We were heartened to see it identified as a necessary solution on Bill de Blasio's campaign website, as well as a priority for the City Council's Progressive Caucus.

The new administration could immediately utilize a small portion of the Department of Homeless Services' (DHS) shelter budget (even just 1 percent would be almost \$10 million!) and create permanent rental subsidies so homeless people can get out of shelters. That funding could also support a pilot project for innovative housing models like community land trusts, which have the potential to create permanently-affordable, democratically-controlled housing for folks at all income levels, as well as supporting small businesses and incubating jobs that pay a living wage.

The city should take all the property whose owners owe taxes on water or violations, and put it into a land bank and develop it for those who really need it. Property that the city acquires through the Third Party Transfer program should be prioritized for nonprofit housing developers, including community land trusts. And the city should create and expand community land trusts that will be permanently affordable to the people who live there.

The new administration could also limit what is considered "affordable housing" to the city of New York. Right now, "affordable housing" can go to folks making upwards of \$80,000 a year, because it's based on Area Median Income calculations that factor in affluent parts of Westchester and Long Island.

BLOOMBERG'S LEGACY

It isn't about whether policies are working, it's about who they're working for. Most of Bloomberg's policies worked just fine — for the very rich. The previous administration upzoned more than one-third of the city, which set in motion speculative real estate forces that jacked up rents and destabilized communities. We need policies shaped by



PROBLEM SOLVERS: (left to right) Stanley Stevenson, Lynn Lewis, Sam J. Miller and Marcus Moore of Picture the Homeless at their office in the Bronx.

TIMOTHY KRAUSE



LUCA MOGLIA/FICKR

forces that jacked up rents and destabilized communities. We need policies shaped by the people who will have to live with them and that will benefit the low-income communities of color that have been devastated by gentrification and long histories of racist municipal planning.



TIMOTHY KRAUSE

ARTIST WITHOUT RESIDENCE: Charlie is a homeless man and an artist who draws regularly.

Too often, elected officials who shape public policy leave out the voices of low-income people in favor of landlords and real estate developers who make huge campaign donations. Since we don't have money, we need to use people power to hold elected officials accountable. When they make promises, we need to make noise until they come through.

USING RESOURCES BETTER

For almost 15 years, we've been saying "Housing, Not Shelter." With a progressive mayor who pledged to address income inequality in office, we intend to make sure that the DHS shelter budget goes into permanent housing.

And we need to stop pretending that aggressive law enforcement and police harassment and criminalization are viable solutions to homelessness.

Taxpayer money also goes to so-called "back-to-work" programs that are mostly scams. They pay all this money for you to go to a place so a paper-pusher can have a job and get paid. Or if you do get paid, it's 32 cents an hour to work in a park. The Work Experience Program (WEP) is essentially a way to skirt minimum wage laws. But if you don't go, you're FTC — "failure to comply" — and can get kicked out of the shelter. Some

people say FTC actually stands for "fuck the client."

We don't think that anyone should be sleeping on the streets, or in shelters. We think everyone should be housed. And please remember that homelessness is not just an issue for those of us without housing. The housing crisis hurts us all, from the people who can't afford housing to the people trapped in sub-standard, dangerous, overcrowded or threatened housing, to the professionals who pay so much of their income toward rent that their life options are dramatically limited. The misery meted out to the homeless also serves to discipline everyone else into accepting their situation knowing that things could be much worse.

Until we live in a city where housing is a human right, and community needs are prioritized over greed, we'll have homeless folks and the gnawing fear of becoming homeless. People who live on the street should be treated with dignity and respect, not subject to daily violations of their constitutional rights and constant arrest. And people who end up in a shelter should not have to deal with unsafe situations, or be trapped there for years because our city's priorities are all wrong.

For more, see picturethehomeless.org.

BORN THIS WAY?

The Radical Legacy of Magnus Hirschfeld and the Fight for LGBT Equality

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THE INDEPENDENT February 25–March 24, 2014 7

Learning Lessons for Keystone XL Battle

BY PETER RUGH

When Steven DaSilva, a retired high school science teacher and member of the Sierra Club, first learned that the southern portion of a transnational tar sands oil pipeline would be built near his East Texas backyard in Nacogdoches County, he launched a petition drive and letter-writing campaign asking local politicians to put a stop to it. Now, four years since picking a fight with pipeline builder TransCanada over the construction of the Keystone XL, DaSilva has emerged a changed man.

He is not alone. Tens of thousands of

people have been brought into the fight against the Keystone XL. Driven by large rallies on the National Mall organized by large green NGOs like 350.org, the pipeline has become an item of mainstream debate and one that, with the release of a favorable environmental impact statement from the Department of State on January 31, took a step closer toward completion. Even though grassroots efforts to halt the project in DaSilva's region have not succeeded, he believes the lessons he learned will be useful in the upcoming battle over the pipeline's northern section.

Since all that's needed to connect the northern portion of the Keystone XL to its

source in Alberta, Canada, is a presidential permit, the fossil fuel industry and its allies in Congress are lobbying President Obama for his stamp of approval.

Contrary to the recent findings from the State Department, anti-pipeline activists say that the 830,000 barrels of heavy tar sands crude expected to flow through the pipeline every day once it is completed will greatly increase carbon emissions and exacerbate climate change. Much to their disappointment, the southern portion of the pipeline — which runs near DaSilva's backyard — was completed last year and became operational on January 22, delivering oil from Cushing, Oklahoma, to Neder-

land and Houston, Texas.

"I hope we can win the fight on the northern leg, but even if we do it's half a victory at best," said author and activist Bill McKibben.

McKibben's group 350.org has helped put the Keystone XL pipeline under scrutiny through a series of national rallies in front of the White House. Following the release of the State Department's report, the group organized more than 200 vigils across the country on the evening of February 3.

"Right now, we're in the snows of New York," McKibben said after addressing the crowd at a vigil in Manhattan on February 3. "We might have to be in the snows of Nebraska if they decide to build [the rest of] this thing."

CHANGING VIEWS

Down in Texas, Steven DaSilva's entire outlook on politics, like that of many environmentalists involved in the movement, has been completely altered over the course of opposing the pipeline. Before getting involved in the scrap against TransCanada in 2010, DaSilva had limited his advocacy to teaching teenagers in his classroom to respect and appreciate their environment.

"I felt like I was doing what I could do to educate future generations," he said. "But then, getting involved, I began to realize how naive I was." The more DaSilva learned about tar sands and TransCanada, the more he immersed himself in activism. And the more active he became, the more frustrating the political process appeared to him.

"I realized that those elected officials who I originally thought were responsible to the people have neglected that responsibility," DaSilva recalled.

In 2012, when work began near DaSilva's house, he decided to join a ragtag group of young environmentalists from around the country who had begun flocking to Texas, Kansas and Oklahoma to organize with families and landowners living along the pipeline's route. Calling themselves Tar Sands Blockade, they put tremendous effort into blocking construction by chaining themselves to heavy machinery, sitting in trees slated to be plowed over and even crawling into a segment of the Keystone XL pipeline itself.

DaSilva picked up a camera and began documenting the direct actions.

SEVEN REASONS TO OPPOSE KEYSTONE XL

The Keystone XL pipeline would allow oil producers to send 830,000 barrels a day of tar sands slurry from northwest Canada to refineries on the Texas Gulf Coast and then onto global markets. To the dismay of the oil industry, environmentalists have managed to delay the Obama administration's approval for the northern leg of the pipeline, which would allow it to enter the United States from Canada. Here are seven reasons Keystone critics says the project is a bad idea:

'BIGGEST CARBON BOMB ON THE PLANET'

The Canadian province of Alberta has 169 billion barrels of tar sands oil that can be recovered with current technologies. On top of that, an additional 1.63 billion barrels in tar sands oil could be reaped in the future as technology develops, more than five times Saudi Arabia's total proven reserves. This has led renowned NASA climate scientist James Hansen to describe the Keystone XL pipeline as the "fuse to the biggest carbon bomb on the planet."

Producing and processing tar sands oil results in roughly 14 percent more greenhouse gas emissions than the average oil used in the United States, according to *Scientific American*. Further downstream in the process, when the tar sands oil is refined, it yields a byproduct known as pet coke that emits at least 30 percent more carbon per ton than an equivalent amount of the lowest quality mined coals.

SENDS WRONG MESSAGE TO REST OF THE WORLD

Scientists estimate that humanity can burn only one-fifth of the Earth's 2,800 billion tons of known fossil fuel reserves between now and 2050 in order to avoid the risk of runaway global warming. That means someone has to start leaving their fossil fuels in the ground. If Canada and the United States team up to exploit the Alberta tar sands, it sends an "anything goes" message to the rest of the world at a time when global cooperation in reducing carbon emissions is urgently needed.

NOT A JOB CREATOR

According to the State Department environmental impact statement on Keystone XL, the project would create only 35 permanent jobs after construction jobs dry up in a year or two. Meanwhile, renewable energy industries like solar and wind power have the potential to create millions of new "green collar" jobs. In 2013, the number of workers in the U.S. solar energy industry grew by almost 20 percent to 143,000, according to The Solar Foundation, while the wind industry currently employs another 80,000 workers.

DOES NOT INCREASE ENERGY SECURITY

Supporters of Keystone XL argue that pumping in oil from the Alberta tar sands will drive down domestic gas prices. However, oil is sold on a global market. Much of the tar sands oil that is funneled to Texas for refining will subsequently be shipped overseas where there are already foreign buyers with contracts to buy it.

BAD FOR THE LAND AND WATER

Tar sands mining and production are already having a devastating impact on 140,000 square kilometers (54,054 square miles) of bo-

real forest, a complex ecosystem made up of forest, wetlands and lakes. According to the Worldwatch Institute, the forest is home to bears, wolves, lynx and caribou and provides critical habitat for 30 percent of North America's songbirds and 40 percent of its waterfowl.

Tar sands operations require millions of gallons of fresh water per day. The contaminated water has to be stored underground or in giant reservoirs whose chemical soup is instantly lethal to birds that land on it.

NASTY PIPELINE SPILLS

Tar sands slurry, also known as diluted bitumen, would travel through the pipeline for refining on the Gulf Coast. It is much more corrosive than regular crude oil and increases the risks of the pipeline leaking and spilling.

Pipeline ruptures have caused major spills of diluted bitumen in recent years in Michigan's Kalamazoo River and in Mayflower, Arkansas. Diluted bitumen is more toxic than regular crude oil. And because it's heavier, it sinks to the bottom of waterways and is much harder to clean up. Keystone XL would traverse over and put at risk parts of the Ogallala Aquifer, a shallow underground aquifer that supplies fresh water to eight states.

BILLIONS IN PROFITS FOR THE KOCH BROTHERS

Koch Industries owns more than 2 million acres of land in Alberta. It also controls 4,000 miles of its own tar sands pipelines, operates tar sands storage and refining facilities and is involved in oil derivatives trading. The company is poised to earn \$100 billion over the next 40 years from its tar sands-related activities, according to a report by the International Forum on Globalization. The company's top executives, billionaire brothers Charles and David Koch, have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into a network of right-wing groups and politicians who make attacking the science of man-made climate change a top priority. Profits from the Alberta tar sands will further replenish the Koch brothers' political war chest.

Sources: Province of Alberta, Scientific American, Worldwatch Institute, Reuters, Rolling Stone, U.S. State Department, The Solar Foundation, ThomasNet News, Indigenous Environmental Network, Inside Climate News, High Plains Water District, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, Environmental Defence, Sierra Club, International Forum on Globalization.

— JOHN TARLETON



ALBERTA TAR SANDS: From pristine forests to industrial wasteland.



TAR SANDS BLOCKADE/FLICKR

PIPELINE PATH: The southern leg of Keystone XL was built through East Texas in 2012-2013.



KATIE MOORE

NYC VOICES: More than 200 anti-Keystone XL protesters turned out at Union Square on February 3, one of more than 200 vigils held across the country that day.

"I was impressed by the fact that there were so many younger individuals going out on a limb," DaSilva remembered, "giving up their early years to stand up to an instrument of climate change, basically putting their lives on hold to fight this battle."

Not all of those who took part in Tar Sands Blockade actions were millennials, however, and police in East Texas did not discriminate in their use of force. One particular moment has burned itself into DaSilva's mind. On October 19, 2012, an elderly friend of his was among those pepper-sprayed during a tree-sit in Cherokee County.

"We're talking about a nonviolent protest," DaSilva said. "To see local law enforcement basically responding to the wishes of a major corporation was really enlightening. These individuals are sworn to protect the public. But here you have violence being perpetrated on peaceful protests."

Despite the heavy-handed reciprocity activists received, their civil disobedience actions helped delay the pipeline and increase costs to TransCanada. Tar Sands Blockade's savvy media team made sure that news of the direct actions spread through social media and occasionally appeared on major news outlets. In turn, the high-profile acts of dissent helped galvanize the wider national movement against the Keystone XL and fossil fuels in general.

"There's a lot to be said for local organizing," DaSilva explained. "Although, national NGOs can help in terms of sharing resources."

He and other East Texas activists have also looked beyond their state. After the Pegasus Pipeline spilled 7,000 barrels of tar

sands crude into the town of Mayflower, Arkansas, last March, Tar Sands Blockade helped orchestrate a community exchange between Mayflower residents and citizens of Gun Barrel City, Texas, who are forced to breathe the hydrocarbon-packed air surrounding the refineries where oil from Pegasus and other pipelines is delivered. Members of both communities shared stories about the toxic effects of the oil. DaSilva wants to build more such alliances, envisaging a grassroots network of front-line communities where fossil fuels are extracted, transported and refined.

"Although we did a lot of our work by the seat of our pants," he said, "I think we've created a model that others can learn from."

Though the fate of the northern section of the Keystone XL might be up in the air, Obama has already beefed up America's oil and gas infrastructure over the course of his presidency, building, as he remarked in 2012, "enough pipeline to encircle Earth and then some." The network DaSilva and others are seeking to build, of communities connected through this new web of fossil fuel infrastructure, could prove a substantial force to reckon with, whether or not the Keystone XL is built.

That doesn't mean the outcome of the struggle over Keystone XL isn't crucial. Politically, it would turn the tide against the fossil fuel industry, which is used to getting what it wants. In terms of the impact on climate change, it means that less tar sands oil — which, according to the State Department's report, is 10 to 17 times more potent than conventional crude — will be burned.

"It's expensive oil," said McKibben. "It's

hard to get out of the ground. It'll only be extracted if there are cheap ways to get it to market. ... If they don't get this pipeline built, further expansion of the tar sands is probably not going to happen."

The release of the State Department's environmental impact report has initiated a 30-day public comment period ending March 7. Other governmental departments will also weigh in. Sixty days later, the White House will issue a draft "National Interest Determination." Should the draft find the Keystone XL beneficial to national interests, a coalition of groups including 350.org, Rainforest Action Network and Credo Action are planning a series of non-violent sit-ins that will target TransCanada and investors in the pipeline. The coalition has organized more than 77,000 people to sign an online pledge to resist the pipeline — although far fewer have been integrated into its organizing drive. They'll be staging a series of direct action trainings around the country in the coming weeks and months that they hope will draw more people in.

Some activists have expressed dismay at Credo's involvement, pointing out that it is the political arm of the cell phone company Credo Mobile. Yet Credo and other large NGOs opposing the pipeline are relying on activists on the ground to build for the di-

rect actions. The success or failure of the campaign could well hinge on the strength of community resistance going forward.

An earlier version of this article was published at WagingNonviolence.org.

Dear State Department,

The 30-day public comment period on the Keystone XL pipeline closes March 7. Comments can be submitted via regulations.gov, where the Keystone pipeline is a trending topic, or mailed directly to:

U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Energy Resources, Room 4843
Attn: Keystone XL Public Comments
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Following the end of public comment, the State Department has 60 days to consider comments from other government agencies and make a recommendation on Keystone XL to President Obama, who has the final decision.

BUILDING RESISTANCE

More than 77,000 people have signed an online pledge to resist the Keystone XL pipeline by participating in "peaceful, dignified civil disobedience" if the State Department signs off on the project this spring and forwards the project to the President for his final approval. The potential civil resistance campaign is being organized by a number of groups, including 350.org, Rainforest Action Network and the Hip-Hop Caucus.

"If tens of thousands of people stand up as President Obama mulls his final decision and commit to participate in civil disobedience if necessary," the organizers wrote in an online statement, "we can convince the White House that it will be politically unfeasible to go forward."

Keystone XL opponents say they will take aim at a wide array of symbolic targets: State Department offices, TransCanada corporate offices, Obama Organizing for Action meetings, banks that are financing tar sands oil development and communities and areas ravaged by Superstorm Sandy and along the pipeline route.

Indigenous groups from across the Great Plains and the West have also vowed to resist the "black snake," which is slated to pass through traditional Lakota Nation lands in South Dakota.

"It is an epic project, it will have an epic response from the tribal people," Gary Dorr of the Nez Perce Tribe in Idaho told the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network.

For more, see credoaction.com/sign/kxl_pledge and oweakuinternational.org.

VISIONS OF CHANGE

By ALINA MOGILYANSKAYA

For many people, art is something that resides in museums and galleries and is bought and sold as a marker of privilege. But what happens when the creative, questioning spirit of art becomes fused with political dissent? In his new book, *A People's Art History of the United States* (New Press, 2013), art historian Nicolas Lampert places his analysis clearly in the tradition of Howard Zinn. Through that lens he rethinks the history of U.S. cultures of resistance: distinct from established art institutions, and rooted in the communities, streets and movements that push for social change

Lampert dedicates his book “to the activist-artists and the artist-activists.” An artist himself, he recognizes the contributions of both movement participants that make visual culture and trained artists that use their work to shape movements. And he offers readers stories and images of art from some 30 political struggles, spanning from Native Americans’ relations with colonial settlers and the American Revolution to the 21st century fight against climate change. Here are some of them.



BRIT BASHING: Famed Revolutionary-era patriot Paul Revere created the engraving *A View of the Year 1765* (above). A harsh piece of anti-British propaganda, it featured colonists raising their swords to slay a dragon representing the despised Stamp Act and a scene from Boston’s Liberty Tree.



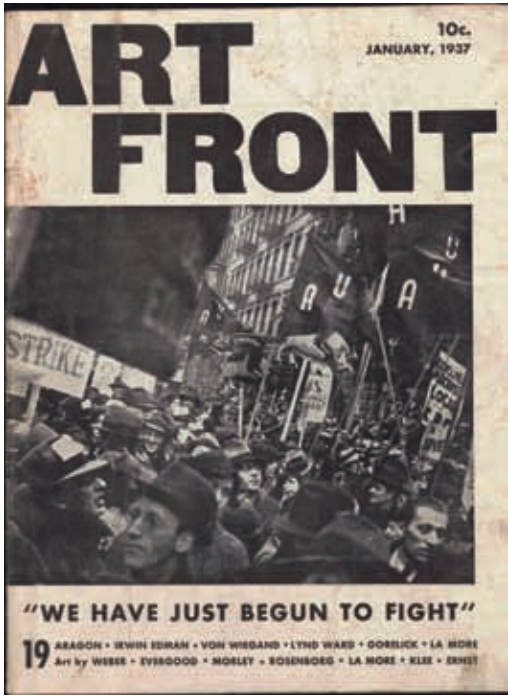
TENEMENT LIFE: Jacob A. Riis — tenement reformer, photographer and author of the book *How the Other Half Lives* — documented the deplorable conditions of immigrants and the poor in New York City’s late 19th-century tenements. His work (above) led not only to tenement reform but also to the new genre of social documentary photography.



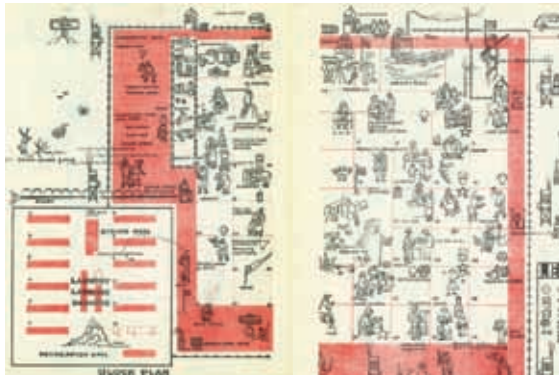
STRIKE! An event program for a giant pageant staged on behalf of the 1913 Paterson, NJ, silk strike (above), in which 25,000 workers walked off the job for six months. Among their tactics was a performance of the strike in Madison Square Garden, spectacularly staged while the strike itself was on-going.



LADY LIBERTY: In the 1910s, the U.S. women’s suffrage movement picked up steam. On March 3, 1913, the day before President Woodrow Wilson’s second inauguration, the suffragettes organized a parade in Washington, D.C. — it was a spectacle of great proportions, with several thousand women marchers, 26 floats, ten bands, six golden chariots and more (above). Many suffragettes were later jailed for their activism, but their efforts paid off with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment granting women the right to vote in 1919.



FIGHTING BACK: During the Great Depression, unemployed artists organized to form the Artists’ Union, which succeeded in lobbying the federal government to create the Public Works of Art Project and the Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project. They used their union newspaper, *Art Front* (below), to agitate.



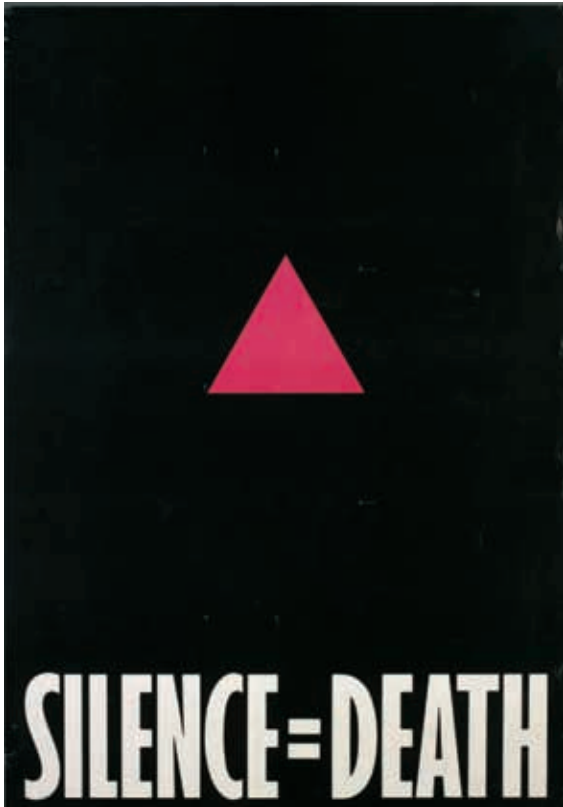
DETAINED: After the bombing of Pearl Harbor by Japan in 1941, more than 100,000 Japanese Americans were placed in government internment camps in remote parts of the western United States. One of the internees, Miné Okubo, created many illustrations (example above) depicting her life inside a camp and in 1946, published *Citizen 13660*, a book about her experiences.



VOLENT VISIONS: The upheavals of the 1960s helped give rise to the Black Panther Party, which used graphic arts as one way to articulate its revolutionary message and its newspaper, *The Black Panther*, to spread it. Emory Douglas, the BPP’s minister of culture, created the party’s visual branding — the image of the pig, Panther warriors, the bootlickers gallery and more. Reflecting the conflicts of the time, Douglas created a December 1970 poster showing an African American man shooting a cop as a child looks on (top). Douglas was also inspired by the images of the Organization of Solidarity of the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America (example above).



GEOGRAPHY OF POWER: In the 1970s, California-based artist Suzanne Lacy used public performance to spotlight and fight back against an epidemic of rape and violence against women. With her geographical focus on Los Angeles, a hotspot of the violence, Lacy undertook such projects as *Three Weeks in May* (1977), a three-week sequence of public events that included performances, actions, speak-outs, defense clinics and more (above, Lacy’s daily practice of stamping “rape” on a map of L.A. as incidents of rape were reported to the police). She also collaborated with Leslie Labowitz-Starus on *In Mourning and in Rage* (1977), a public performance of mourning conceived in response to the mainstream media’s sensationalized coverage of the murders of 10 L.A. women by two serial killers (at top, *A Woman’s Image of Mass Media* (1977), a photomural that was created after the performance).



PINK TRIANGLE: As the AIDS crisis escalated in the mid-1980s and the government did little to help, activist art and graphics became a crucial element of the AIDS movement. And the artworks became a form of political and cultural resistance in and of themselves — one of the most iconic, the 1986 poster *Silence = Death* (below) was used by AIDS activist group ACT UP as a call to action and a direct response to government apathy and media hysteria.



CREATIVE CLIMATE: The Yes Men, the culture jamming duo of Jacques Servin and Igor Vamos, use hoax, spectacle and parody to intervene in the excesses of capitalist culture. In one 2006 project targeting global warming, they posed as employees of the oil giant Halliburton attending a “catastrophic loss” insurance conference. There, they presented the *SurvivaBall* — a giant, orb-like outfit supposedly able to protect its wearer in all kinds of catastrophic conditions, including climate change-induced natural disasters (below).



1. PAUL REVERE, *A VIEW OF THE YEAR 1765*, 1765 (AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY). 2. JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY, *PAUL REVERE*, 1768 (MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON). 3. JACOB A. RIIS, *LODGERS IN A CROWDED BAYARD STREET TENEMENT* — “FIVE CENTS A SPOT,” 1889 (MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK). 4. ROBERT EDMOND JONES, *PATERSON PAGEANT PROGRAM COVER*, 1913 (AMERICAN LABOR MUSEUM/BOTTO HOUSE NATIONAL LANDMARK). 5. BAIN NEWS SERVICE, PUBLISHER, “HEDWIG REICHER AS COLUMBIA IN SUFFRAGE PAGEANT,” MARCH 3, 1913 (LIBRARY OF CONGRESS). 6. *ART FRONT* (COVER), JANUARY 1937 (SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION). 7. MINÉ OKUBO, (MAP) *TREK*, VOL. 1, NO. 2 FEBRUARY 1943 (UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY). 8. EMORY DOUGLAS, POSTER FROM *THE BLACK PANTHER*, DECEMBER 19, 1970 (© 2013 EMORY DOUGLAS/ARS, IMAGE COURTESY THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF POLITICAL GRAPHICS). 9. RAFAEL MORANTE, *POWER TO THE PEOPLE*, GEORGE, OSPAAAL POSTER, 1971—IMAGE DEPICTS THE MURDER OF GEORGE JACKSON IN THE SAN QUENTIN PRISON. 10. SUZANNE LACY STAMPING “RAPE” ON MAP OF L.A. IN *THREE WEEKS IN MAY*, MAY 1977, CITY MALL IN CITY HALL, LOS ANGELES (SUZANNE LACY). 11. SUZANNE LACY AND LESLIE LABOWITZ-STARUS, *A WOMAN’S IMAGE OF MASS MEDIA*, 1977 (SUZANNE LACY). 12. SILENCE = DEATH PROJECT, *SILENCE = DEATH*, 1986, POSTER (NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY). 13. GRAN FURY, *THIS IS TO ENRAGE YOU FROM NEW YORK CRIMES*, 1989, FOUR-PAGE NEWSPAPER (NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY). 14. THE YES MEN, *SURVIVABALL*, CATASTROPHIC LOSS CONFERENCE, AMELIA ISLAND, FLORIDA, 2006 (YES MEN). 15. THE YES MEN, *SURVIVABALLS* STORMING THE U.N. BUILDING, NEW YORK CITY (YES MEN).

Politics in Chile

CONFRONTING THE ENDURING LEGACY OF DICTATORSHIP

By Emily Achtenberg

Editor's note: Mass protest movements have erupted throughout the world in the past three years as ordinary people take to the streets to demand fundamental change from unresponsive political systems. In many cases these movements have been repressed, ignored, co-opted or defeated electorally. One of the exceptions has been Chile, where a massive student movement has transformed the political debate and helped bring to power a new president who has promised to move the country significantly to the left.

On Election Day in Chile, students occupied and hung a banner outside presidential front-runner Michelle Bachelet's campaign headquarters, proclaiming: "Change is not in the Presidential Palace, but in the 'wide avenues.'" It was a powerful reminder of how student mobilizations have transformed Chile's political agenda during this election year, at once invoking the past (through the final words of martyred socialist President Salvador Allende), and laying down the gauntlet for an anticipated future when the country might finally move beyond its 20-plus year "transition to democracy."

Bachelet takes office March 11. The promise of structural reforms to address the deep divide between rich and poor in Chil-

ean society propelled Bachelet and her center-left New Majority coalition to a landslide victory in December over Evelyn Matthei, candidate of the center-right Alliance. While Chile has the highest rate of economic growth among 34 developed countries, it is also the most unequal. Bachelet campaigned on a radical platform of educational, tax and constitutional reform to redress the injustices of a political and economic system inherited from the dictatorship era and largely favoring the wealthy.

After failing to gain a majority on the first ballot in November (in a field of nine candidates, including seven to the left of center), Bachelet handily won the run-off election with 62 percent of the vote, the biggest presidential victory in eight decades. Despite this seemingly broad mandate, she now faces formidable obstacles in seeking to deliver on her campaign promises, as Chile's undemocratic institutions and alienated electorate — both enduring legacies of dictatorship — conspire to discourage change.

ELECTORAL CONTEXT

Most of Chile's contemporary problems



HIGH EXPECTATIONS: Michelle Bachelet was elected president of Chile on December 15 with 62 percent of the vote. She has vowed to move the country to the left.

have their origin in the anti-democratic structures established by the 17-year dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet and left largely intact by successive democratic governments of the center-left and center-right since Chile's "return to democracy" in 1990. These include a constitution (imposed after a fraudulent referendum conducted under a state of siege) and a set of laws that enshrine the power of conservative elite minorities, an electoral system that perpetuates their disproportionate representation and a deregulated economy affording wide latitude and subsidies to the private sector.

As the intense electoral campaign converged this past fall with the 40th anniversary of the military coup that overthrew Allende, the election seemed to be as much a referendum on Chile's tormented past as on its future direction. The dramatically contrasting but intertwined family histories of the two presidential candidates — Bachelet's father, an Allende loyalist general, died under torture in a military school run by Matthei's father, a member of Pinochet's junta — kept the past front and center despite the candidates' efforts to refocus on the future.

In the run-up to the 40th anniversary, Chileans were bombarded with graphic images of the coup, repression and resistance though previously unseen documentary footage, dramatizations and debates widely broadcast through the mainstream media. The avalanche appears to have captured the popular imagination, especially among the 60 percent of Chileans born after the coup (and others who "saw but did not see"). Polls show that only 16 percent of Chileans now think the coup was justified, down from 36 percent a decade ago.

But it is the highly mobilized Chilean student movement that has genuinely challenged Pinochet's legacy by catalyzing

popular demands for institutional reform. Through massive protests and school take-overs beginning in 2011 and continuing to this day (with widespread public support), students have highlighted the inequities of a dictatorship-era educational system that features private sector subsidization, vast discrepancies in the quality of municipally-controlled primary and secondary schools based on social class and the highest university student cost burden of any developed country. Joined by trade unions and other popular sectors, they have articulated transformative demands that governing political elites (including Bachelet herself, in her first term) have not dared to address during 20 years of democratic transition. These include a return to universal, free, high-quality public education (which students had under Allende), a revival of the public pension and health care systems, progressive tax reform to finance social spending and a refounding of the Chilean state through a new constitutional assembly.

While the student organizations did not endorse a presidential candidate, Bachelet sought and won the support of several prominent ex-student leaders running for Congress on the Communist Party and other splinter left tickets, including popular activist Camila Vallejo. In exchange, the New Majority partially incorporated the students' demands in its platform, pushing the electoral agenda substantially to the left. For the first time since the return to democracy, the Communist Party joined the center-left political coalition, giving Bachelet the opportunity for a sufficient congressional mandate to push through her promised reforms.

Continued on page 16



THE STUDENTS UNITED: Student protests surged in Chile 2011.



WHO WAS SALVADOR ALLENDE?

Salvador Allende was a doctor-turned-politician elected president of Chile in 1970. Allende's ascent marked the first time in history that a

Marxist was democratically elected to power in the Western Hemisphere. Allende's government nationalized key industries, expanded social welfare programs and carried out a land reform program that broke up large rural estates on be-

half of formerly landless peasants.

Richard Nixon, who worried that other Latin American nations might try to imitate Chile's democratic revolution, famously told his national security team to "make the economy scream" in Chile. After a three-year destabilization campaign orchestrated by the CIA, Gen. Augusto Pinochet led a military coup that toppled the Allende government on September 11, 1973.

In the coup's aftermath, upwards of 3,000 Allende supporters were rounded up and killed. Many more were jailed and tortured or fled into exile.

The new military regime proceeded to carry out a program of mass privatizations. This was done under the guidance of economists trained at the University of Chicago by free-market guru Milton Friedman. The neoliberal economic system instituted during the Pinochet era exists to this day in Chile, though it is being increasingly challenged by a younger generation that did not experience the trauma of military rule.

As for Allende, he died during the coup while defending the presidential palace as it was bombarded by his Air Force. In his final broadcast shortly before he was killed, Allende vowed that

"much sooner than later, the wide avenues will open up so that a free people can build a better society."

It took almost four decades, but Chile's streets have filled again in recent years with demands for change. How much of a better society Michelle Bachelet's government delivers is likely to depend on the push she receives from students and other newly empowered social movements that helped bring her to power.

— JOHN TARLETON

Hold the Hummus

BDS CAMPAIGN GAINING GROUND

BY ALEX KANE

Israel's military might is unmatched in the Middle East, and its most formidable foe — the Lebanese Islamist group Hezbollah — is currently preoccupied in Syria. The young country is fully integrated into the global economy, having recently joined the elite Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The Jewish state's top trading partners are the European Union and the United States, the world's leading powers.

So why are the Israeli government and its defenders in the United States freaking out? While the country is far from isolated, its image in the United States as a plucky democracy in a hostile region is slowly eroding. And predictably, that erosion is coming hand in hand with Zionist and conservative backlash.

At the end of last year, the American Studies Association's (ASA) decision to boycott Israel inspired the neoconservative writer Ben Cohen to call on the Jewish community to "harass, frustrate, and crush [the boycotters] ... without mercy." In early 2014, the Modern Language Association's (MLA) conference included a talk about how Israel denies entry to those trying to visit Palestinian universities, and vitriolic e-mails containing images of anti-Jewish Nazi boycotts were sent to MLA members because of it. Last year, the mere hosting of a pro-Palestinian event at Brooklyn College prompted one state legislator to warn of "the potential for a second Holocaust here."

Fueling the erosion of Israel's image is a movement summed up by three letters: BDS, or boycott, divestment and sanctions, originally a Palestinian response to Israel's decades-old occupation and denial of Palestinians' human rights.

In 2005, a coalition of over 200 Palestinian organizations, ranging from labor unions to refugee rights' groups, issued a call to the world to boycott Israeli products, divest from companies doing business with the state and lever sanctions. The movement's goals are threefold: to end the occupation, ensure equality for Palestinian citizens of Israel and implement the right of return

for Palestinian refugees expelled by Zionist forces in 1948. Modeled on the global anti-apartheid movement that targeted South Africa, BDS has become one the most visible and potent global left-wing movements.

The message has found fertile ground in Europe. Major pensions funds have divested from Israeli banks over their involvement with illegal settlements. And in recent months, the BDS movement has racked up some important, albeit symbolic, victories in the United States, Israel's key backer and the site of its most vociferous defenders.

In April 2013, the Association for Asian American Studies became the first academic group in the United States to endorse a boycott of Israeli academic institutions, which BDS advocates have targeted because of their involvement in crafting Israeli policy towards Palestinians. For instance, Israeli universities have produced the intellectual rationales for military assaults and are key partners in the production of deadly equipment like drones and the bulldozers used to demolish Palestinian homes. While the Asian-American group's decision hardly made a splash, it was followed up in December 2013 by the ASA's vote to also boycott Israel. That move unleashed a firestorm of controversy, with not only Ben Cohen but also university presidents and Israel lobby groups harshly criticizing the ASA and some smearing the group as anti-Semitic.

Any discussion of BDS provokes Israel's defenders, and the ASA's endorsement of the movement was no exception. In recent months, both Democrats and Republicans in various state legislatures have introduced measures to punish the ASA by prohibiting taxpayer funds from being used to help students or scholars travel to their conventions — and the New York State Senate was the first body to pass the legislation. If schools violate the law, a portion of their state aid would be cut off. The campaign has also migrated to Congress, where two Illinois representatives introduced a bill to cut off federal funds to any academic institution endorsing BDS.

Legislation targeting the BDS movement is worrisome for free speech and academic freedom. But this type of

Continued
on page
18



MARLENA BUCZEK SMITH

truth

Chelsea Manning, US Army Prisoner of Conscience



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Turn, Turn, Turn

A NEW ERA FOR FOLK MUSIC EMERGES

BY ELI SMITH

When Pete Seeger died on January 27, it prompted an outpouring of reflections across all media. Most commentators focused on Seeger's amazing record of activism, which stretched across more than seven decades and encompassed just about every cause the Left has advocated since the New Deal. Much less mentioned by commentators is that folk music was the foundation upon which Seeger's identity as an artist was based and that he dedicated a substantial portion of his life and work to popularizing a repertoire and building an audience for folk music.

Pete Seeger came out of the milieu of the 1930s and '40s Popular Front era when leftwing musicians and cultural workers were looking for popular, working-class musical forms that could serve as an alternative to capitalist cultural production. Seeger himself worked with Alan Lomax at the Library of Congress Archive of Folk Song in the late 1930s and would soon form his first group, the Almanac Singers, with Woody Guthrie and several others to promote "people's music." They identified the music of the American rural working class, which had an old and venerable non-commercial culture, as being that of "the people." Their musical styles, such as banjo music, ballads and guitar blues became the basis for a new concept of "folk" or "people's music." Since then, folk music has been associated with leftwing politics in the United States.

Left political movements in this country are very weak at the moment and that is reflected in the dearth of topical protest music being created by folk music performers. However, there is a legitimate, non-corporate, underground music movement rooted in the traditions of folk music that New York and the rest of the country should know about.

Today's inheritors of the folk



GARY MARTIN

music tradition do some great songwriting but are also focused on reintroducing the all-but-lost traditional material — Elizabethan ballads, old work songs and blues played on the banjo. These old, rural proletarian forms are of no use to the music industry. But, they are robust, beautiful styles of music that like the best original songs of today, tell human stories. In a way it brings us back full circle to the spirit of discovery that drove the folk music movement of the 1930s.

The music and presentation of this new folk music is very per-

sonal, human in scale and has a great respect for history, not just the contemporary moment. This is also music that aligns with similar interests in slow and local food movements, environmentalism and other humanistic impulses toward building community and creating a more sustainable world.

Eli Smith is the producer of the Brooklyn Folk Festival and Washington Square Park Folk Festival. You can listen to his internet radio show and blog at downhomerosdioshow.com.

BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH MUSIC

Are you interested in folk music and the community-building aspect of Pete Seeger's legacy?

If so, you should check out the Jalopy Theatre & School of Music. Located at 315 Columbia Street in Red Hook, this venue/music school/coffee shop/bar/restaurant/instrument store/repair shop is the thriving, non-corporate home to a community centered on music.

The Jalopy Theatre presents folk music of various stripes six nights a week, and their "Roots n Ruckus" show, free on Wednesday nights, is especially good. The music school for adults and children offers classes in banjo, guitar, mandolin, ukulele and fiddle in various folk styles. It also provides group classes to learn harmony singing and repertoire and ensemble classes to learn how to play with others in various styles. Jalopy also has its own internet radio station at www.jalopy.biz.

Also, don't miss this year's sixth annual Brooklyn Folk Festival, which will run from April 18-20. Most "folk festivals" today exclusively present "singer-songwriters." Performers in this one subcategory of folk music have monopolized the field because the music industry is only interested in original songs that they can exclusively own and promote as new. This does a grave injustice to anyone actually interested in the true diversity and richness of folk music.

The Brooklyn Folk Festival offers an authentic folk festival, along the lines of the early Newport Folk Festivals that Pete Seeger helped to found back in 1959. Seeger presented a diversity of folk music styles in his own performances, and the Newport Folk Festival certainly presented an incredible range of music in its early days; old-time string band musicians, blues, jug band music, folk singers, Gospel and spirituals, traditional music from other parts of the world, as well as Bob Dylan and other "singer-songwriters." The Brooklyn Folk Festival strives to present this diversity with contemporary performers of amazing quality who are largely unknown to the general public. For more, see BrooklynFolkFest.com.

— Eli Smith

TALENTED

Here are some contemporary performers to check out, most of whom are based here in New York City:



JERRON "BLINDBOY" PAXTON — an incredible performer of guitar-based country-blues music, old-time banjo and stride piano. Local to New York.

THE WHISKEY SPITTERS — The house band at the

Jalopy Theatre (see sidebar) performing blues, hokum, old time and jug band music. Local to New York.

THE DOWN HILL STRUGGLERS — A traditional, old-time string band performing songs, ballads and banjo and fiddle breakdowns in an archaic style. Local to New York.

THE FOUR O'CLOCK FLOWERS — Duet featuring Ernie Vega and Samoa Wilson, playing blues, bal-



lads and folk music in a very fine style. Local to New York.

FRANK FAIRFIELD — An extremely gifted young performer on the banjo, fiddle and guitar playing old time songs, ballads and fiddle tunes.



FERAL FOSTER — Excellent songwriting from a musician based solidly in blues, folk, gospel and Balkan music. Foster faces some of

contemporary life's grimmer realities in his music and writes songs that tell a human story. Local to New York.

PAT CONTE — An amazing musician, collector and artist. Conte plays very well in many styles of traditional American music, but is particularly well-versed in old-time banjo and fiddle and guitar blues.

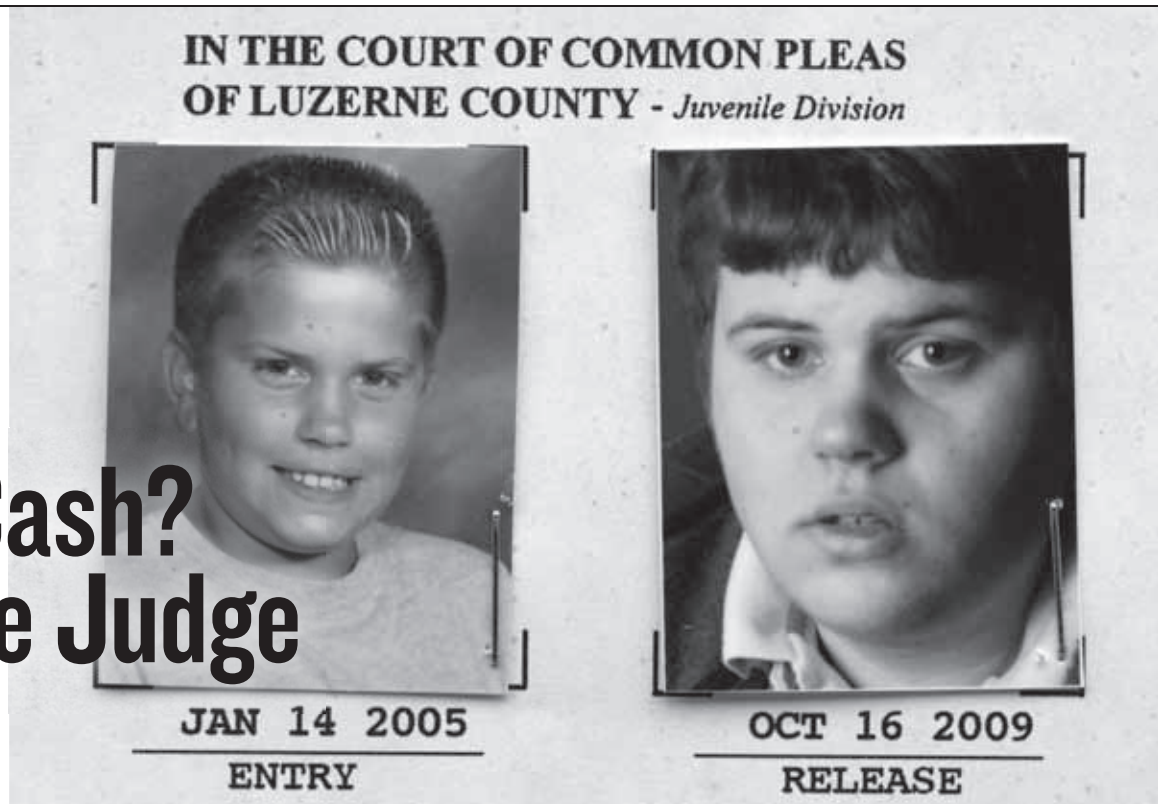


Kids for Cash? You Be the Judge

Perhaps the most dramatic encounter in the “Kids for Cash” scandal — in which some 3,000 teenagers in central Pennsylvania were sent to private detention centers by a judge on the take from the contractor who built the facilities — came when Sandy Fonzo confronted the judge who threw the book at her 17-year-old son, Ed Kenzakoski, and began him on a journey through the criminal justice system that ended when he committed suicide at the age of 23.

“Do you remember me? Do you remember my son, an all-star wrestler? He’s gone. He shot himself in the heart,” Fonzo screamed at Judge Mark Ciavarella as he stood outside the federal courthouse in Scranton, Pa., after being convicted of taking \$2.8 million in bribes from the builder of the PA Child Care and Western PA Child Care detention centers.

Part of what made the confrontation so memorable was that Ciavarella never responded to Fonzo, instead he turned his back and



CHILDHOOD'S END: Charlie Balasavage was one of 3,000 Pennsylvania youths who were sent to juvenile detention for minor infractions.

walked away with his lawyer. Little did anyone know that at this same time, the disgraced judge was breaking his silence in interviews with the director of a new film about the scandal.

Both Ciavarella and Judge Michael Conahan spent hours talking to filmmaker Robert May before they went to prison — for 28 and 17 years respectively. May pairs their version of what happened, and why, with that of the kids and parents who also lived through it, or in some cases, didn't. The result is *Kids for Cash*, a new documentary film that offers new and important insight into how the scandal happened, and why it is not unique.

Some of May's interviews with Conahan take place on a Florida beach where the former judge vacations before his sentence begins.

We learn that Conahan was the financial mastermind of the scheme and it is somewhat cathartic to hear him admit his crimes. But it is May's intimate exchanges with Ciavarella in his home office that provide the real tension.

“I wanted them to be scared out of their minds,” says the former juvenile judge who is seen earlier in the film addressing an auditorium full of high school students and telling them he would “send them away” if they appeared in his courtroom for a school-based infraction. Ciavarella stands by his allegiance to the “zero tolerance” approach for misbehaving youth, but you'll have to watch the film to see if he ever admits to accepting money in return.

May avoids the common trap of being solely outraged about the bribery aspect of the Kids for Cash scandal by having the parents and teenagers tell their stories of how Ciavarella sent them away for weeks and months for minor infractions in order to teach them a lesson before they committed actual crimes.

One of the kids featured in the film, Hillary Transue, describes how she was 14 years old when school administrators called police to report that she had created a MySpace page mocking her assistant high school principal. Her mother was told she may receive a lighter punishment if she didn't get a lawyer involved. But when Hillary appeared before Ciavarella he sentenced her to 3 months in a private juvenile detention center. She eventually won her release and was able to graduate from high school and go to college. May contrasts her success with most of the teens who share stories of struggling to complete their education and often wind up back in jail.

What emerges through such interviews is that even without the financial gain Ciavarella incurred, his zero-tolerance policies were devastating and should be reevaluated.

Kids for Cash is set to hit movie theaters at the same time the

Obama administration's Justice Department has called for reforms to policies that have contributed to the criminalization of students, known as the “school-to-prison pipeline.” While the young people featured in the film are all white, it is widely recognized that the majority of those impacted are African American and Latino.

A recent report by the Vera Institute of Justice that examined 25 years of research on zero-tolerance policies meant to deter drug use and violence in schools found that “neither schools nor young people have benefitted.” Instead, they suffered “significant adverse effects,” including severe disruption of students' academic progress. The report also notes research that shows staying in school can “help to prevent young people from engaging in delinquency and crime.”

One of the most disturbing aspects of *Kids for Cash* is that everyone — from the bailiffs to the transcriptionists to the prosecutors — who worked in the courtroom where Ciavarella held sway stayed quiet about the injustices that were routinely being meted out. It was business as usual. Only when one of the parents stumbled upon a group of activist lawyers in Philadelphia did the scandal come to light.

Ideally this riveting film will be seen by those curious or concerned about the workings of our criminal justice system, and focus further attention on the lives of the kids that can still be salvaged if zero-tolerance policies are reformed.

— RENÉE FELTZ

Renée Feltz is a producer and criminal justice correspondent for Democracy Now! (democracynow.org).

Kids for Cash debuts in New York on February 28 at the Village AMC 7 and Empire 25 AMC. For more information, see kidsforcashthemovie.com.

SENART FILMS/KIDS FOR CASH MOVIE

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TUE MAR 4 • 7PM • FREE SCREENING

Blackfish. "Never capture what you can't control." Tells the story of Tilikum, a performing killer whale that killed several people while in captivity.

TUE MAR 11 • 7PM • FREE PANEL

Anarchists in the Boardroom: Can we constructively subvert our NGOs, unions or charities into more radical work?



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AP/MARK MORAN

CLAIMS HE'S INNOCENT: Former judge Mark Ciavarella.

Freedom Bound

In Pursuit of Freedom
BROOKLYN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WEEKSVILLE HERITAGE CENTER
IRONDALE ENSEMBLE PROJECT
Through winter 2018

Now hanging on the walls of the Brooklyn Historical Society are some handsome reproductions of 19th-century paintings: bucolic views of Brooklyn when it was all dirt roads and farmland. Around some of these images are newly affixed white margins. A printed sign tells us why: what you see — happy, white townsfolk and romantic landscapes — needs to be weighed against what you don't see: the brutal exploitation of enslaved Africans that helped fuel economic expansion in the city of Brooklyn.

This tension — between the seen and the unseen — animates much of “In Pursuit of Freedom,” an exhibit devoted to the history of abolitionism in Brooklyn. Though it maintained a large slave population in the late 18th century, New York State began gradual emancipation in 1799 and achieved near-total abolition by 1827. By the time of Harriet Tubman, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Abraham Lincoln, Brooklyn was far from the center of the abolitionist struggle.



HISTORY LESSON: Colored school #2 in what is now Crown Heights was one of three African schools established in pre-Civil War Brooklyn.

Or, was it? The exhibition shows us that Brooklyn experienced slavery — political, economic, personal — even with no legal slaves inside its borders. For example, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 led to free Brooklynites being abducted and sold into servitude. And sugar was big business in 19th-century Brooklyn, with huge amounts of the stuff being refined in and sold out of Williamsburg but, of course, sugarcane doesn't grow there: it was grown on Southern slave plantations and shipped up north.

Then as now, Brooklyn has been marked by bursts of economic growth, political radicalism and utopian dreaminess: a history that can be read into the extraordinary lives outlined in the exhibit. One of these personages was Elizabeth

Gloucester, an abolitionist and businesswoman who, by the time of her death in 1883, had become the wealthiest Black woman in America (and one of the wealthiest women in America, period). There's the community of Weeksville, a small but vibrant village (located in what would now be Crown Heights) that became one of the largest free Black communities in the country. Similarly, there's the story of Timbuctoo, an experimental, upstate community that sought to aggregate eligible Black voters. Timbuctoo was short-lived, but its example influenced the Hodges brothers, who were instrumental in establishing Black schools, newspapers, churches and businesses, primarily in Williamsburg. Sometimes, though, the utopian dreamers

didn't dream how we might hope them to (Walt Whitman, alas, was not entirely against slavery).

The exhibition must contend with limited space and a paucity of physical artifacts (the show consists mainly of printed reproductions). It works through these issues quite admirably, with careful design and clever interactive displays. The show is at its best when it deals with the activism and media of the abolitionist struggle, like the work of Henry Ward Beecher: a white pastor and the brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe who held mock slave auctions in order to raise funds for emancipating enslaved women. It also highlights the story of John Jea, who went from slavery to self-taught literacy — learning to read, he said, was like finding a “pearl of great price” — to traveling the world as a preacher and writing an autobiography that detailed the horrors of slave life. The exhibition includes choice bits of newspaper editorials, political cartoons and printed propaganda: not too much, but what's there has a kick.

“In Pursuit of Freedom” does a good job of claiming an important spot in abolitionist history for Brooklyn, but the show is going for more than that. Beyond just Brooklyn, there's the question of what defines “freedom,” and the ways that multiple, complex realities end up coalescing into broader

historical narratives. American slavery, at the time, was not just a simple moral concern but also a snake's nest of other issues, including questions of economics, human nature, citizenship and legal practicality. Freedom came through legal emancipation, but just as importantly: it came through the establishment of communities and cultures where Black Americans could not only live, but live decently.

Though the show is light on original documents, it ends with a rare 1864 edition of the Emancipation Proclamation signed by Lincoln himself. Alongside it, some text pointedly — though only briefly — links the Proclamation to contemporary issues of law-enforcement policy, education access and voting rights. In today's news, we see stories of white people legally excused — because they felt “threatened” — of murdering young Black men and women, and of the ever-widening gap between rich and poor — like in Brooklyn, where a former sugar factory may soon become a massive luxury apartment complex. While we stand and marvel at the Emancipation Proclamation, “In Pursuit of Freedom” asks us to consider what it means, really, to be free in America.

— MIKE NEWTON

For more, see pursuitoffreedom.org.

Chile

Continued from page 12

ELECTORAL OUTCOMES

The campaign raised high expectations for systemic change, as well as the political cost of failing to deliver. In the end, the New Majority picked up slim majorities in both houses — 55 percent in the senate and 56 percent in the house — thanks in part to the election of Vallejo and other student and activist candidates. But the coalition did not achieve the super-majorities required by Pinochet-era laws to reform the educational system (57 percent), the electoral system (60 percent) or the constitution (67 percent).

One reason is the binomial electoral system itself, which awards the losing coalition half the seats in each congressional district unless the winning one secures more than two-thirds of the votes. A record-low voter turnout by a politically alienated electorate, in the first presidential election since a 2012 rule change made voting voluntary, also likely worked against the New Majority's congressional aspirations.

With this mixed electoral outcome, New Majority initiatives such as tax, pension and health care reform, which require only a majority vote, should be achievable. Radical educational reform may also be within

reach, if independent delegates can provide the critical swing votes. But political and constitutional reforms, if attainable at all, will require bargaining, negotiation and compromise with more conservative factions, at the risk of alienating progressive popular constituencies.

In a sense, this represents a political victory for the center-right Alliance, which has succeeded in preventing the institutional left from carrying out its proposed reform program unobstructed. The low voter turnout, used by conservatives to question the legitimacy of Bachelet's reform mandate, may make these issues even more contested.

Within the New Majority coalition itself, there are diverse party factions ranging from Christian Democrats (many of whom originally supported Pinochet) to Communists, with significantly different visions, strategies and timetables for reform. Internal conflicts are intensified by continuing pressure from the social movements. In the area of education, Bachelet (a member of the Socialist Party) has promised to institute tuition-free public higher education and end state subsidies to for-profit institutions within six years. But students and their elected representatives want to abolish private schools completely, and are impatient for quick results.

A CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY?

A key split has also arisen over the issue of how constitutional reform might be accomplished. While the Christian Democrats and Bachelet support the institutional strategy of “change from within,” relying on the undemocratically elected Congress to produce a new constitution, students and other popular sectors, supported by the Communist Party, are calling for a constitutional assembly to be convoked by referendum. This strategy has been successfully implemented by leftist governments in Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador at the behest of popular movements, and is currently a key demand of the left opposition in Honduras.

Under a grassroots initiative called “Mark Your Vote,” more than 10 percent of Chilean voters in the December election indicated their support for a constitutional assembly by marking their ballots “AC” in the December election. In a recent national opinion poll, 45 percent of those surveyed endorsed the concept.

As a strategy that offers the possibility of re-engaging a civil society that is profoundly alienated from the consensus model of post-dictatorship duopoly politics, the constitutional assembly is an intriguing option. It could provide an opportunity for Chileans to reconnect with their own deeply

democratic traditions, illustrated by the unprecedented levels of political and social awareness and participation achieved through *poder popular* (popular power), the touchstone of Allende's Popular Unity government.

Despite the new discourse of remorse evidenced during the 40-year coup anniversary, many Chileans feel that this aspect of their past has been largely excised from official historical memory. Even in the otherwise outstanding Museum of Memory and Human Rights developed by Bachelet in her first term, there is little reference to the participatory institutions of the Allende era (such as workers' councils and collective neighborhood organizations) that Pinochet systematically destroyed. A revival of this deeply democratic tradition through the constitutional assembly could be an important step in genuinely challenging the legacy of dictatorship.

Emily Achtenberg is an urban planner and the author of NACLA's Rebel Currents blog. She observed the 40-year coup anniversary in Chile with a School of Americas Watch solidarity delegation. An earlier version of this article appeared on NACLA's Rebel Currents blog at nacla.org (bit.ly/1egpPiY).

Theater with a Kick

By David Meadow

Bruce Lee led a strenuous life, to say the least. Never mind his mysterious death at age 32, which has kept conspiracy theorists busy for decades. Lee’s time on earth threw quite enough at him: He endured colonialism and racism in Hong Kong and the United States. His father gave him endless grief over his choices. He was ambivalent about where to put down roots, or if he even had the roots. Yet he nonetheless managed to become an action-movie legend, an esteemed teacher of martial arts, and, if that wasn’t sufficient, the 1958 cha-cha dancing champion of Hong Kong.

Enter playwright David Henry Hwang, an admirer of Lee who has taken audiences on excursions through the complexities of gender, race and cultural identity in plays such as *M. Butterfly* and *Chinglish* — often lending greater depth and sensitivity to classic works about Asian characters. Now, *Kung Fu*, his play about Lee’s life, is showing at the Signature Theatre. This is a great name: it’s the esteemed martial arts tradition Lee emerged from and taught, but also the name of a TV show that Lee conceived as a vehicle for himself and was shafted out of (in favor of David Carradine, with his eyelids taped to look *half-Chinese*). The play seems an ideal project for Hwang, and his personal connection to Lee’s quandary of “Who am I, really?” is palpable. Who was Bruce Lee? The play gives us many possible answers.

Dancer-actor Cole Horibe is quite impressive as Lee. This performer, who started in martial arts in his native Hawaii, first

caught the playwright’s eye with his flashy martial-arts stylings on the show *So You Think You Can Dance*. (Hwang offers the term “dancical” for this production). Horibe moves beautifully, evokes passion and angst in the right places, and mimics Lee’s famous facial and verbal tics throughout, including the Piercing Scream While Looking Away From the Guy He’s Decking. To make that action convincing, choreographer Sonya Tayeh makes great use of some dozen performers, whose movements evoke straight dance, classroom sparring and genuine deadly fights while the tightly-popping drum sets and horns of the early 1970s blare on the speakers.

Like the music, Hwang’s script is taut and energetic. It’s rarely heavy-handed, though it is almost self-consciously cinematic in places, and one can sometimes cut through the irony with a knife. Of course, truth can be more ironic than fiction, as many biographical pieces remind us. We see Bruce Lee chafing, vocally, under society’s rigid definitions of what he can be — but then, when he’s immobilized from an accident, his wife must plead desperately with him to let her earn money to support the family. After all, can he still be a *man* if she’s the breadwinner? (For true fanatics, the action-packed yet highly psychological 1994 biopic *Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story* also touches on Lee’s struggles with the “isms.” If anything, that film is more explicit than this play about his pain at not having his own wife, a white woman, fully understand her husband’s experience of racism).

Partly responsible for Bruce’s old-country gender norms, and

general insecurity, is his father, Lee Hoi-Chuen, who in real life worked in Hong Kong as a singer of classical Chinese opera. (The sumptuous costumes and movements of this tradition make for some particularly striking set pieces, with swords flying and long feather headdresses nodding to anoint the audience in the front row). Francis Jue rails bitterly as the aggrieved parent — first a living one, then a nagging, internalized ghost — whose son needs to learn some humility.

Horibe’s Bruce lashes back, resentful of the British colonial regime, but especially resenting his father’s subservience to their colonizers. From where Bruce stands, Hoi-Chuen seems to have “defer to me as a good Chinese son” hopelessly conflated with “defer to our oppressors.” (Notably, Bruce Lee classics *Fist of Fury* and *Enter the Dragon* both deal with racial injustice, backed by state and colonial power — and in the former movie, it’s Asians oppressing other Asians). Jue portrays his character, with poignant urgency, as a working stiff whose occasional shucking and jiving has a stoic dignity of its own — a dignity his son

doesn’t appreciate, even though it’s geared to his benefit. However, by the last time Bruce’s father finds fault with him, he sounds annoyingly bleating and repetitive, and it’s not clear if that is Hwang’s or the director’s intention.

The tight ensemble casting, with triple-threat dancer-fighter-actors in multiple roles, takes effort to follow, but there’s a playfully subversive logic. You realize, several scenes in, that the casting is *partially* race-arbitrary, if such a thing can exist in theatre, in order to make some of its points about race. Peter Kim, an Asian-American actor, has obvious fun alternating between a stereotypically awkward, self-doubting Japanese-American in Lee’s class and the expansive, glad-handing white network exec William Dozier. Meanwhile, Clifton Duncan, a black actor, logs significant time as white screen legend James Coburn (who studied kung fu with Lee), and this includes a deliciously absurd moment where Coburn “whitesplains” Hollywood Orientalism to his teacher.

One character I’d have loved to see “unpacked” more is Ruby Chow, the brassy restaurateur

who, with her husband, provided an early employment opportunity for the struggling Lee in Seattle. Chow’s 2008 obituary in the *Seattle Times* profiles an Asian-American superhero in her own right, who advocated for the community from both the grass roots and elected office. Though there may have been some material that didn’t make it to the final version, Chow’s whole role in the play is to tell young Bruce that he’s more trouble for her than he’s worth, and should find a job that suits him better.

Bruce Lee worked, and his career “worked,” on multiple levels. So does this play, right down to its title. If you’re interested in the Bruce Lee oeuvre, martial arts, Hollywood history, 1970’s blues-funk or global race and gender relations, you’ll probably get — dare I say it? — a kick out of this one.

Playing at the Signature Theatre through the end of March. Tickets for performances through March 16 are \$25.



LEGENDARY: Dancer-actor Cole Horibe stars as Kung Fu legend Bruce Lee.

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MARCH THEATER LISTINGS

DARK WATER

WRITTEN BY DAVID STALLINGS
DIRECTED BY HEATHER COHN
PRESENTED BY MANHATTAN THEATRE WORKS
The swampland of Louisiana is hit with the most massive oil spill known to history. Barnacle, an old sea turtle, fights against man’s destruction, nature’s wrath and her enemies of the wild to save her children trapped in the spill. Poetry, allegory, music, puppetry and movement create this magical world as the animals of Louisiana face the ultimate threat to their lives.

Mar. 14–29
Thu–Sat, 8pm; Sun, 2pm

THE THEATER AT THE 14TH STREET Y
344 E 14th St at First Ave
Tickets: \$18 (\$15 students/\$12 seniors)
mtworks.org/darkwater

TAKE ME BACK

WRITTEN BY EMILY SCHWEND
DIRECTED BY JAY STULL
PRESENTED BY KINDLING THEATRE COMPANY
After a four-year stint in federal prison, Bill is back at home, living with his diabetic mom and looking for a way out of Oklahoma. But today’s America doesn’t give a guy like Bill many options. How far is he willing to go to change his fortune? With a dose of melancholic nostalgia infused with dark humor, *Take Me Back* examines the impossibility of the American dream when surrounded by nothing but minimum wage Big Box stores and chain restaurants.

Feb. 28–Mar. 22
Wed–Sat, 8pm; additional performances on
Mar. 3 and Mar. 4 at 8pm

WALKERSPACE
46 Walker St, b/w Broadway & Church
Tickets: \$18, available via smarttix.com

SHAKESBEER

WRITTEN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
DIRECTED BY ZAC HOOGENDYK, CRISTINA LUNDY, AND ROSS WILLIAMS
PRESENTED BY NY SHAKESPEARE EXCHANGE
A three-hour pub crawl featuring plenty of Bard to go with your beer (or wine, or cocktails). The crawl is divided between four bars, with a Shakespeare scene breaking out at each location. The actors are shoulder-to-shoulder with the audience, drawing them in and making this experience about as “up-close and personal” as Shakespeare gets.

Sat, Mar. 1
Sat, Mar. 8
3–6pm
Additional dates thru the spring & summer
Visit shakespeareexchange.org for tickets and more information.

BLACK MAN

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY JORDAN BUCK
PRESENTED BY THE OCTOBER PEOPLE
Based on the life of a troubled artist who lived and tragically died in the subway tunnels of New York City. His chosen family struggles to come to terms with his sudden end, but through the depth of their collective grief, they rekindle his spirit and conjure the life of a complex and gifted man who faced many inhumane injustices, unnoticed over the roaring sounds of the trains.

Mar. 21–Apr. 5
Fri–Sat, 8pm; Sun, 3pm
JAN HUS PLAYHOUSE THEATER
351 E 74th St, b/w First & Second Aves
Tickets: \$18, available at
theoctoberpeople.com

— Listings provided by ROBERT GONYO and the GO SEE A SHOW! podcast, goseeshowpodcast.com

White Men's Rage

Angry White Men
MICHAEL KIMMEL
NATION BOOKS, 2013

It's been a tough 40 years for working and middle-class white men in America. Accustomed to an exalted place in the social hierarchy, they have seen their wages stagnate and decline since the early 1970s. At the same time, women have gained unprecedented new freedoms and our society became more racially and culturally diverse.

Rather than adapt and change, many of these men cling to male dominance. Michael Kimmel, a professor of sociology and gender studies at Stony Brook University in New York, journeys deep into the worlds of his white male aggrieved subjects.

Kimmel has produced a masterful account of white men's rage. He focuses on the sons of successful skilled craftsmen, small businessmen and small farmers disenfranchised by the corporatizing of America, mass production, outsourced work, mega-stores like Walmart and Home Depot and restaurant chains like McDonalds and Applebees.

FALLEN SONS

The fathers and grandfathers of these raging men were the people who started and prospered in family businesses. They were the men who owned local grocery stores, hardware stores, mom-and-pop restaurants, and small farms. They worked hard and proudly supported their families in comfort. They expected to pass their hard-earned accomplishments onto their sons in the patriarchy that was America. That did not happen.

Their dispossessed sons and grandsons are confined to dead-end, low-wage jobs without rec-

ognition, prestige, comfort, social mobility or a family wage. The angry, dispossessed men Kimmel describes still define manhood through dominant provider roles, dependent wives and children and intact marriages. Those American realities have disappeared.

Kimmel also describes the rage of male blue-collar workers. Their work was outsourced, leaving them without family wages or the marital security those wages allowed. Their rage is fed by hate radio and TV, which transforms men's sad confusion into hatred for feminists, gays and immigrants, à la Rush Limbaugh.

A MEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT?

Kimmel introduces the reader to groups that flourish as these men founder.

Men's Rights Associations lay claim to men's right to stay married with regular access to their children. They rail against women's rights to divorce, to paid employment and to child support when separated or divorced with children. These angry men do not seem to want equal roles in caring for their children, but rather the right to access women and children with male authority over them. They are differentiated from Father's Rights groups, which struggle for legal acknowledgment of the active roles they play and want to continue to play in their children's lives after separation or divorce.

Kimmel also explores what he calls, "The White Wing," racist male supremacy groups like the KKK, the White Skinheads, White Aryan Resistance (WAR), and the Neo-Nazis that wish to avenge white men's humiliation and loss through violent combat against immigrants, minorities, Jews and feminists. They want to

restore white male domination. They turn their rage against the corporate sector, which has outsourced their jobs and taken their livelihoods. They lay the blame on Jews who they see as corporate masterminds.

Although Kimmel does not discuss them, I would mention that there exist four other main bastions of male hegemony: the NRA, the U.S. military, Evangelical churches and heterosexual pornography.

THE ROLE OF CAPITALISM

The mass of Americans are mere numbers in the ledgers of big business. The decisions to outsource millions of jobs and to automate millions more are decisions made with profit as the sole consideration. Yet, Kimmel does not stress the role of corporate capital or capitalism itself in the problems he describes.

Wages stagnated in the 1970s when companies in many industries found they could profitably move production overseas and more newly empowered women and minorities began taking jobs in many fields that previously had been reserved for white males. In a job market where institutional racism and sexism had caused labor shortages, white males received one bonus for being white and another for being male. Since labor is now abundant, those bonuses are no longer necessary.



Profits continue to accumulate at the top. In 2013, the 400 richest Americans took in \$300 billion and their total assets surpassed \$2 trillion, more than the bottom 60 percent of the population. Corporate interests have tightened their grip over the media and many politicians. The system, in turn, diverts the anger of enraged white men who do not see that the problem is capitalism itself.

Organizing for economic and political democracy and the redistribution of wealth and power — and not simply a second New Deal as Kimmel urges — is necessary to address the economic sources of male rage.

DEMOCRACY IN RELATIONSHIPS

There is a second part of a solution that Kimmel does not mention. That is democracy in personal relationships. The men he describes are unaware of what they missed. Their "manhood" left them out of touch with their emotions. They were robbed of tenderness, vulnerability and the right to perform daily care for their homes and children.

That caring and emotional labor teaches people invaluable lessons about the importance of sustaining life. Part of the anger of "entitled men" comes from their own limited definition of manhood. The only intimate emo-

tional friendships many could have are with wives who do the emotional labor to with connect them. It is women who overwhelmingly do the social connecting that permitted these men to appear self-sufficient while their wives were caring for their children and maintaining connections with family, friends and community. Without husbands, women still maintain emotionally intimate relationships with women friends, children and families. Men's "self-sufficiency" does not permit that.

What Kimmel's good book points toward is that we need a strong, appealing, sensible Left that addresses the dispossession of America's angry men and replaces it with a movement that respects their emotional, political and economic needs. It's really up to us.

— HARRIET FRAAD

Harriet Fraad co-authored Class Struggle on the Home Front and writes a regular blog with Richard Wolff, "Economy and Society," at rdwolff.com/econ_psy and at HarrietFraad.com. Her show, "Interpersonnal Update" airs every other Thursday from 1-2pm with Tess Fraad Wolff.

BDS

Continued from page 13

response is bound to backfire, casting Israel's advocates as thuggish wielders of power trying to shut down discussion of Israeli human rights abuses.

Other events have also tarnished Israel's image. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the main pro-Israel lobby group, recently attempted to scuttle the initial U.S. deal with Iran over its nuclear energy program by pushing for more sanctions on the country, which if enacted would likely kill the diplomatic effort. It was

only after the Obama administration successfully lobbied Democrats to oppose new sanctions that AIPAC backed off.

And in January, the actress Scarlett Johansson announced she was the new spokesperson for SodaStream, a company with a factory in an Israeli West Bank settlement. While Johansson's move was a coup for the company, it also garnered an unprecedented amount of attention for the BDS movement, which has called for boycotts of SodaStream. As the controversy continued, Bloomberg News reported that the company's stocks slid "amid growing criticism for businesses operating in a territory that

Palestinians seek for an independent state."

Meanwhile, Israel's occupation of Palestinian land — and the home demolitions, arrests of children and building of illegal settlements that have accompanied it — continues with no end in sight. Each individual Israeli outrage provides fodder for boycotts of Israel, and encourages more people to join the BDS movement. For example, after the brutal Israeli assault on Gaza in 2008-2009, the anti-war group CODEPINK focused more of its attention on Israel and launched a campaign to boycott beauty products made in an illegal West Bank settlement. The growth of the U.S. Campaign

to End the Occupation is another reminder of the increasing potency of the movement targeting Israeli human rights abuses. When the campaign group, an umbrella organization, formed in 2001, there were a few dozen member organizations. Today, there are more than 400 member groups, with many of them working on BDS.

As Sarah Schulman, the LGBT activist and scholar, said last March, "when significant subcultures move on Israel/Palestine, the U.S. will move." Israel's image among the broad American public remains positive. But in some sectors — like academia and the media — we see movement.



DIACRITICAL/FICKR

WINTER WORK: Members of the Sanitation Department clear the streets during a snowstorm.

Sanitation Workers YOU GOTTA LOVE THEM

Picking Up: On the Streets and Behind the Trucks with the Sanitation Workers of New York City

By ROBIN NAGLE

FARRAR, STRAUSS AND GIROUX, 2013

Rationally, we know garbage isn't picked up by the faeries, but to much of the public, it might as well be. We "take out" the garbage, but who removes it?

To write *Picking Up: On the Streets and Behind the Trucks with the Sanitation Workers of New York City*, NYU anthropologist Robin Nagle took a job with the city's Department of Sanitation and followed, as a participant observer, those she calls "the city's own municipal housekeepers." A city can't survive without regular and dependable trash removal, and her ethnography presents a detailed portrait of the 7,200 men and women willing to do it expeditiously. It's a tough, dirty, and dangerous job.

Nagle notes that injury rates for "san workers" outstrip harm done even to cops and firefighters. The Bureau of Labor Statistics ranks refuse and recyclable materials collection as the nation's fourth most dangerous job, exceeded only by commercial fishing, logging and plane piloting.

Adding insult to injury, those who prevent New York from being blanketed in waste and who keep traffic arteries plowed and passable even in the worst snowstorms are all but invisible to fellow New Yorkers. Like Rodney Dangerfield's everyman, they get no respect. When a malicious Queens city councilman charged workers with engaging in a slowdown during the great 2010 snowstorm — this while they actually worked 41 days straight with no evidence of doing any but consistent hump work — the media ran with the story.

It's a common enough axiom. Work, when creative, is valued. Labor, which is by definition uncreative, is not. But the 2010 allegations of a worker slowdown were preposterous, Nagle writes. "If a foreman ever gave an order not to plow during a snowstorm, several san workers told me, no one would listen."

In fact, the department operates 24/7/365. Workers on two-person crews (it was three to a truck until then-mayor Ed Koch cut the number down — negotiating a "productivity deal" in exchange for a wage increase) must learn survival skills such as lifting trash safely, operating a variety of machinery, maintaining vehicles, dodging street traffic, avoiding getting cut or poisoned or crushed and acclimating to the stench and perpetually stained work clothes, all while looking out for each other.

And it has its advantages. In the era of the precariat, when even PhD holders wait tables, these san men and women have full-time, secure jobs. The pay is good. There's even a generous retirement package and a strong union, rare enough in the public sector today and almost unknown in private industry. With overtime they can make more than \$100,000 annually — decent money. A former bus driver tells Nagle of one more advantage: he switched from the Transit Authority to the sanitation department "because this trash doesn't talk back."

Nagle should have included more discussion of union-management conflicts. The nine-day strike in 1968 paralyzed the city, and Nagle acknowledges that the union is a powerhouse, but what role it plays day to day — as opposed to management's ongoing

ing oversight, which she details at length — isn't clear from her telling. What fights did it pick? What fights did it miss, and why? Who chooses to become a union official as opposed to a foreman?

Also missing, though not surprising for an anthropological study that's typically thick on description but sadly thin on explanation, is any critique of garbage as a public service under capitalism. There may be, as Michael Bloomberg remarked, no Democratic or Republican way to collect garbage, but a class society shapes and constrains public services. How this one should function or could function better isn't part of Nagle's story.

Apart from that, the book is a wonder. A reader comes away knowing the story is authentic because the woman was there. She gets the job, its smells, dangers. The formal and the informal rules and eccentric work culture (and what job culture isn't a bit eccentric?). She renders the scene as lived daily, along with a transparent reading of the department's origins and mission. It's a comprehensive view from the top to the bottom of an army fighting a dirty war.

So instead of honking at the driver whose garbage truck is blocking the street, shake the sanitation worker's hand for the job he or she does. Failing that, tell them "good job, and thanks."

— MICHAEL HIRSCH



DAVE SANDERS

SAN MAN: A Sanitation Department worker at his garage in Maspeth, Queens.

UPCOMING EVENTS

WED, MAR 5 • 7:30PM

TALES OF THE 1% FILM SERIES / U.S. PREMIERE

Screening: *Vuelta y Vuelta: Memorias del Exilio Chileno (Memories of the Chilean Exile)*

Dirs: Daniela Bichl and Markus Toth | 2013 | 76 min | Spanish with English subtitles

Co-sponsor: Theater of the Oppressed Laboratory

Sliding scale: \$6/\$10/\$15

WED, MAR 6 • 7:30PM

CREATING A SUSTAINABLE CITY CHARTER: WORKSHOP AND DISCUSSION, PART II

Led by Rachel Laforest, Matt Birkhold, and Peter Marcuse

Co-sponsor: Right to the City Alliance

Sliding scale: \$6/\$10/\$15

THU, MAR 13 • 7:30PM

"REFLECTIONS ON OCCUPY" SERIES: PARTICIPANT DISCUSSION

What Did We Learn From Occupy?

Facilitated by friends of the Brecht Forum

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Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education reveals how neoliberal policies, practices, and modes of material and symbolic violence have radically reshaped the mission and practice of higher education, short-changing a generation of young people. Giroux exposes the corporate forces at play and charts a clear-minded and inspired course of action out of the shadows of market-driven education policy. Championing the youth who have dared to resist the bartering of their future, he calls upon public intellectuals—as well as all people concerned about the future of democracy—to speak out and defend the university as a site of critical learning and democratic promise.



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—Bob Herbert, former op-ed columnist for the *New York Times*

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